

**A HISTORY
OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS**



G. W. MILLION

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**A
HISTORY
OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS**

Writer

G. W. MILLION

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P R E F A C E

It has been the pleasure of this writer to work with the Rev. G. W. Million of Pocahontas, Arkansas, for the past three or four years in the formation and compiling of a history of the Free Will Baptist people. We contributed to the extent of gathering some minutes of the various bodies of Free Will Baptists which were of research interest. These bits of history, together with others as gathered by Mr. Million over the years of research, were carefully placed in order and put into manuscript by Mr. Million. The manuscript was scrutinized thoroughly before final preparation for publishing this book.

This manuscript was presented to the Rev. J. O. Fort, editor of the Free Will Baptist Press; then the editor and I spent several days editing it for printing. After the editorial work was completed, the manuscript was forwarded to the author for final approval before it was sent to press.

When the editorial staff of the Free Will Baptist Press had completed reading proof on the type, both the editor and I read the proofs. Finally, when all were satisfied, the material was made into this volume of Free Will Baptist history.

With the preparation and presentation of these true historical facts, we believe we are giving to our denomination and the general public a history that will be appreciated by our people at large. This work represents much untiring effort to give the truest history possible.

We believe it is by the grace of God that the Free Will Baptist Press allowed its editor to help prepare the work; and it is by the grace of God that the favor was bestowed on the work to

make it possible for the publication of this Free Will Baptist history. Therefore, in releasing it, we believe it to be what our people want and what they have looked for for several years. We pray God's blessing upon the work. May our people at large purchase and read it so that they may be intelligently informed as to the history of Free Will Baptists.

Sincerely,

J. C. Griffin, Chairman,
Board of Publications and Literature
National Association of Free Will
Baptists

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FOREWORD

The Arminian, General, or Free Will Baptists of America, especially those in the southern part of the United States, may be regarded as descendants, in part at least, from the English General Baptists; and a complete understanding of their origin, doctrine, and polity cannot be correctly had without some knowledge of the history of those people. We are therefore prefacing our history of the Free Will Baptist people in America with a brief history of the English Baptists.

To show that we are not alone in our opinion, as expressed above, we will next give a few quotations from some good authorities on that point: Burkitt and Read say, "Most of these churches, before they were united in an association, were General Baptists and held with the Arminian tenents. We believe they were the descendants of the English General Baptists because we find that their Confession of Faith was subscribed by certain elders and deacons and brethren in behalf of themselves and others to whom they belonged, both in London and several counties in England, and was presented to King Charles II. They preached and adhered to the Arminian or Free Will doctrines and their churches were first established upon this system. They gathered churches without requiring an experience of grace previous to their baptism, but baptized all who believed in the doctrine of baptism by immersion and requested baptism of them."¹

Mr. Riley says, "The earliest churches in Virginia, like most of those first organized in the south, were deeply infected with Arminianism. This was due to the fact that many of the earlier preachers in the south came direct from England and were the exponents of the principles of the General Baptists of Great Britain."²

Speaking of the "Original Free Will Baptists" he says, "These are a remnant of the General Baptists who settled in North

¹ Burkitt and Read, *History of the Baptists*, pp. 31, 32.

² Riley, *History of Baptists in the South*, p. 19.

Carolina in the first half of the eighteenth century. The territory in North Carolina occupied by them lay contingent to that which was occupied by the General Baptists in Virginia. In each of these colonies they formed an association. In 1787 the General and Regular Baptists united upon a Calvinistic basis. There were a few Free Willers who did not go into the coalition. Eventually they came to be known as Original Free Will Baptists.”³

Other similar quotations could be given, but it seems to me that this is sufficient; however, it will be seen further over in this book that when these churches were short of pastors they sent to these General Baptist brethren for preachers, and they promptly sent pastors over to serve their churches. This was especially true in Virginia and South Carolina.

The General Baptists of England sent corresponding messengers over to the General Conference of Free Will Baptists in the Randall movement, time and again, and those brethren returned the correspondence; furthermore, they did it enthusiastically, showing that they regarded each other as belonging to the same class or denomination.

Historians and journalists use the name, *Free Will*, and the name, *General*, in this respect interchangeably (Burkitt and Read, Benedict, Dr. G. W. Lasher and others).

³ Riley, *idem.*, p. 345.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN OR
GENERAL BAPTISTS OF ENGLAND

We are beginning the history of the English General Baptists as a permanent organization under the name, *Baptist*, with the year 1607. In doing this are we using good judgment, and are we on safe ground?

On this point we quote from Mr. Vedder: "With the first decade of the seventeenth century we reach solid ground in Baptist history. Before that we must proceed by conjecture from one isolated fact to another; but after 1610 we have an unbroken succession of Baptist churches, established by indubitable documentary evidence."¹

Again Vedder says: "The fact must not be overlooked, however, that ten Baptist churches in England claim an earlier origin than this whose story has been told. Hillcliff (1522), Eythorne, Coggeshall, Braintree (1550), Farrington Road (1576), Crowle, Epworth (1599), Bridgwater, Oxford, Wednore (1600). To substantiate these claims there is little evidence but tradition of no great antiquity. Thomas Crosby, the earliest of our historians, who sought with praiseworthy diligence for all accessible facts, and was personally familiar with some of these localities, had either never heard such traditions or did not consider them even worthy of mention."²

Baptists (1612-1614)

The history of the Baptists under that name and in a permanent organic form began in England in the years 1612-1614; there were Baptists in England, probably, before this date; but, if so, they did not form any organizations that were permanent—of a permanent nature.

1 Vedder, *A Short History of Baptists*, p. 201.

2 Vedder, *idem.*, p. 205.

We have historical records which speak of a religious people whom many regard as Baptists before this time, and these records indicate that they were very zealous in their religious efforts; the records testify that these people were severely persecuted on account of their devotion to the faith they professed by the secular authorities of their time; but if they formed organizations, they disappeared before this time.

Dr. E. T. Hiscox has this to say of English Baptists: "At what time the Baptists appeared in England in definite denominational form, it is impossible to say. But from the twelfth to the seventeenth century many of them suffered cruel persecutions, even death by burning, drowning and beheading, besides many others and sometimes most inhuman tortures. . . . In 1538 royal edicts were issued against them, and several were burnt at the stake at Smithfield."³

Brande, speaking of this matter says, "In the year 1538 thirty-one Baptists that fled from England were put to death at Delft, Holland; the men were beheaded and the women were drowned." Bishop Latimer, speaking of the Baptists of the time of Henry VIII, says, "The Baptists that were burnt in the different parts of the kingdom went to death intrepidly and without any fear." (See Benedict's History of Baptists of Pur., Vol. 1, p. 138).

Thus it will be seen that these people who were regarded as Baptists were a very sincere, devoted, zealous and courageous people, willing to give their all for the principles which they espoused, even their lives for the Christ whom they served; no people could have shown greater devotion and courage than they. But if they had churches or other religious organizations, they went down or disappeared.

Let the reader note that the different names or terms which are now used to indicate the different kinds of Baptists were not used during the time of which our historians are writing at all; if there were different kinds of Baptists back there, our historians

³ Hiscox, Dr. E. T., Baptist Short Order, pp. 196, 197.

didn't seem to know about it. There are no terms used by them of those times indicating different kinds of Baptists.

If one believed, taught and practiced water baptism by immersion only and opposed sprinkling and pouring as baptism and refused to have his children baptized while in infancy, he was termed a Baptist by those who differed from him on these points of doctrine and by most of those holding a government position at that time. Differences among Baptists back there—if there were differences then—were not considered important enough to create divisions among them. Different names or terms used to indicate different kinds of Baptists began to appear in history after 1638-1644, in England and later in America. We will discuss more on this point later.

Baptist Churches

The first Baptist church which was of a permanent nature was formed of Englishmen who fled to Holland on account of persecution; this church was formed at Ley, Holland, in 1607 under the leadership of Smyth and Helwys; it was moved to England in 1612. Proof on this point is clear and plentiful.

Dr. Hiscox says, "The first regularly organized church among them (Englishmen), known as such in England, dates from 1607, and was formed by a Mr. Smyth, previously a clergyman of the established church."⁴

Mr. Benedict says, "The first regularly organized Baptist church of which we possess any account, is dated from 1607, and was formed by a Mr. Smyth who had been a clergyman in the Church of England. It was formed on the principles of the General Baptists."⁵ Armitage, Orchard, Vedder and other leading Baptist historians say about the same thing.

We will next insert the statements of two authorities which are not Baptist: The American Encyclopedic Dictionary says, "The first permanent Baptist congregation in England did not come into

⁴ Hiscox, Dr. E. T., *idem.*, p. 200.

⁵ Benedict, *General History of the Baptists*, p. 204.

existence till A. D. 1611. The pastor was Thomas Helwys, who, jointly with John Smyth, founded (constituted) the General Baptist Church."⁶

The Columbian Cyclopedia says: "The first church (Baptist church) which we find in England after his day (Henry VIII) is one organized in London in 1612-1614 of members who had returned from Amsterdam; and from that time their history in England is clear and traceable."⁷

Formation of the First Baptist Church

As stated heretofore, the Baptists were persecuted very severely in England; not only Baptists but all nonconformists were persecuted. By nonconformists we mean all those citizens of the kingdom of Great Britain who would not attend the services of the Church of England and conform to her teaching and practice in matters pertaining to religion. Baptists would not do that, and they were classed with the nonconformists.

The Church of England had that form of religion established by the law in England and supported by the government; the visible head of that church was the king or queen of England.

Laws were passed, the intention of which was to force all citizens of that country to attend the services of that church or leave the country. All nonconformists, including Baptists, believed the Church of England to be unscriptural in organization, teaching and practice; these good, honest and sincere people left their home and country rather than do those things which they thought to be contrary to the teaching of the Bible. They crossed over into Holland where they had the privilege of worshiping God in the way they understood His Word to teach. Among those who fled into Holland were men of talent.

John Smyth was one of those who were in the migration; Mr. Newman says that Smyth was a man who was well educated; he was a graduate from one of the best institutions in England.

6 The American Encyclopedic Dictionary, vol. 1.

7 The Columbian Cyclopeddia, vol. III.

He also held a very prominent position in the Church of England, and was directed to meet some of the nonconformists, try to convince them of their error and try to win them back to that church. He met them all right; but instead of convincing them that they were in the wrong, they convinced him that he was in the wrong; so he joined this body of nonconformists and fled to Holland.

The Confession of 1611

This document, though called a confession of faith, is really a declaration of the faith, doctrine and practice of this first Baptist church at the time it was written. Today we would call such a document a treatise. People who differed from the established church were often misrepresented to their rulers by their enemies; so this little church had the courage to write a document and present it to the king, setting forth in their own words what they believed and taught. It was dated 1611, but was probably written before that time. It is in our mind now to say more about this document later. The doctrine set forth in it was such that it caused these people to be labeled and called Arminian or General Baptists.

The Church Moves to England

“Shortly after the publication of this Confession,” says Mr. Cramp, “Mr. Helwys, accompanied by most of the church, returned to England.”⁸

On this point, Mr. Crosby says, “About the same time also, Mr. Helwisse began to reflect on his own conduct and that of other English dissenters in leaving their own country and friends, and flying into a strange country to escape persecution. Whether this did not proceed from fear and cowardice, and whether they ought not to return, that they might bear testimony for the truth in their own land, where it was in danger of being wholly extinguished;

⁸ Cramp, *History of Baptists*, p. 287.

and they might also encourage and comfort their brethren who were there, suffering persecution for Christ's sake; the conclusion of this was that he and his church quickly left Amsterdam and removed to London, where they continued their church state and assemblies of worship as publicly as the evil of the times would permit."⁹

After their return to England they pushed their doctrine with great courage and energy. They also met their old-time persecution; but this did not daunt nor swerve them in the least; it only made them bolder and stronger as it did the early followers of the Lamb in the Apostolic Age.

In order that our readers may realize the severity of the persecution which they underwent, we will quote the following from Taylor's *History of General Baptists*: "This open avowal of their sentiments, and steady continuance at the post of duty, as they esteemed it, exposed the General Baptists to great suffering. It was not uncommon, to use their own words, to lie many years in filthy prisons in hunger, cold and idleness; divided from wife, family and calling; left confined in miseries and temptations, so that death itself would have been less punishment. Many of them were exposed to want, lost their estates, and were confined in noisome dungeons till death released them. Many of them were burnt at the stake."¹⁰

"This persecution was not on account of any unruly conduct in the way of immorality, for these people were a very pious people, contending only for their rights and New Testament Christianity. Cromwell said of these people, who were accused and condemned by their Presbyterian persecutors: "They are no Anabaptists; they are honest, sober Christians; they expect to be used as men.'"

Despite the persecution waged against them, they grew and continued to grow. Their success was so great and their plea for New Testament truth so strong, simple and appealing that their

⁹ Crosby, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

¹⁰ Taylor, *History of General Baptists*, p. 89.

opponents became alarmed. Some of the strongest and best educated writers of the times were aroused and took up their pens against them. On that point Crosby says, "The books written against them at this time show that they went on with courage and great resolution; and notwithstanding the severities used against them by the civil power, increased very much in their numbers."¹¹

Also Dodd and Cleaver, two noted writers, in their apology for taking up their pen against these people, say that "The people of this persuasion take great pains to propagate their doctrine, and divers persons, of good note and piety, have been prevailed upon by them."

In this manner the General Baptists continued their struggle for New Testament truth in faith and practice until the year 1689 when William III ascended the throne of England and stopped religious persecution for a while at least in that country.

Helwisse and his little church located at New Gate, Old London, when they returned to England; and Mr. Taylor says, that they continued their church state and public assemblies as regularly as the intolerant spirit of the times would permit. Mr. Armitage tells us that the Dutch Baptists of London rallied around Helwisse and Murton, Helwisse's successor, and the young church numbered 150 in 1626. Helwisse died in 1625, and John Murton succeeded him in the leadership in the church. By this time there were five churches; one each in London, Lincoln, Sarum, Coventry and Tiverton.

Soon churches sprang up in other parts of London, and in Kent, different parts of Lincolnshire, Bourn, and Market Deepning; later churches were formed in Burley, Petersborough, Laningsburg, Tattershall and Cambridgeshire.

Mr. Wood says that there were seventy-one General Baptist churches in England in a flourishing condition at the beginning of the Civil War. He says further that a good percentage of the soldiers were Baptists and quite a number of them preachers; and

¹¹ Crosby, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 275.

the authorities permitted them to preach and to establish churches in communities where they were stationed. He also said they used that opportunity to a very good advantage. Mr. Newman says in his *History of the Baptists*, Page 47, "After 1626 the General Baptists made rapid progress." By 1660 they numbered 20,000. We will mention some of the churches and give their location and a bit of their history because of their importance to the movement of that time, and for the further reason that it will enable us to give the names and services of some of the leading ministers of those times.

A General Baptist church was formed at Bell-Alley on Coleman Street in the early part of the reign of Charles I, which became a very strong congregation. Often the churchyard was frequently crowded with the overflow of the people who attended church there. This church was noted not only for its size but also for the number of noted preachers that held membership in the church. It was said to be the largest Baptist church in England at that time.

Mr. Thomas Lamb was one of its able ministers who served as pastor for some time and rendered great service in that capacity.

Mr. Henry Denne was also a member of this church at Bell-Alley and was said to be a very able minister. He was sent by this church to preach the gospel to the people in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, and his labors were very effectual; many churches sprang up as a result of his preaching.

The next church of our kind that we will mention is the church at Warboys; it was formed by Mr. Denne while on the mission mentioned above and is located in Huntingdonshire, England. This became a flourishing church and spread the gospel into many adjacent counties; this church was formed sometime prior to 1647.

We feel that we should mention the church at Fenstanton also. It was formed by Mr. Denne while on the mission mentioned above. This church had existed before Mr. Denne's visit, but had been greatly discouraged and scattered by the bitter per-

secutions of those times. He revived it, reorganized it, and started a new era of progress. After its revival and reorganization by the powerful labors of this fine man, the church did well and made some valuable contributions to our cause in that region. The records of this church were put into book form consisting of 430 pages, called the *Fenstanton Records*, and covers the period from 1689 to 1811.

The county of Kent in England was a very fertile field for the General Baptist people. Their success in this county was considerable before the civil war began. William and David Jeffrey were the principal leaders in spreading General Baptist doctrine in these parts. They gathered as many as twenty churches in the county of Kent alone. Mr. Denne was also very active in this county.

The General Baptists in this county were at one time very strong in the practice of feet washing; William Jeffrey was said to be a considerable stickler for the practice. The greater part of the success in this county was accomplished in the last half of the seventeenth century (after 1640).

Associations: On the matter of associations Adam Taylor, an English General Baptist historian, says: "It is not easy to ascertain the number of associations into which the English General Baptists were divided; new ones being frequently formed, and old ones dissolved. During the period which we have been reviewing, we have discovered traces of the Buckinghamshire, the Cambridgeshire, the Dorsetshire, the Isle of Ely, the Kentish, the Lincolnshire, the London, the Northamptonshire, the Western and the Wiltshire Associations. These all existed at the close of the seventeenth century; and appear then to be, in a greater or lesser degree, prosperous. Several of them we know were composed of a considerable number of prosperous churches.

"These associational meetings probably took their rise during the civil wars, as we find them frequently assembling under the protectorate."

General Assemblies: These were composed of representatives

from the various associations, and from such churches as chose to send their deputies, which might be either ministers or private brethren.

Mr. Grantham, who was a prominent minister and leader among them, was a decided advocate for both these institutions, and quotes, as sufficient authority, the meeting at Jerusalem, mentioned in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

“General Assemblies were established sometime before 1671. The General Assembly met only on *emergent* occasions, on an average, once in two years.”

Appeals were often made to the General Assembly by congregations within its jurisdiction; and it was claimed that it had lawful power to hear and determine such cases and to excommunicate if they found such action justifiable.

The associations were clothed with powers similar to those exercised by the General Assembly; and it is not hard to see that these bodies, keyed with such powers, would encroach on the rights and privileges of the churches. Therefore, the historian says, “In the process of time, so strongly were many inclined to constitute these bodies into courts of appeal that it was found necessary to define their powers and make them merely advisory councils,” as Baptists have done since in all countries.

Religious Liberty: Masson, in his *Life of Milton*, says, “This obscure Baptist congregation seems to have become the depository for all England of the absolute principle of liberty of conscience as expressed in the Amsterdam Confession as distinct from the more stinted principle advocated by the general body of independents.

“Not only Helwisse’s folks differ from the independents generally on the subject of infant baptism and dipping; they differed also on the power of the magistrate in matters of belief and conscience.

“It was in short, from this little dingy meetinghouse, somewhere in London, that there flashed out first in England the absolute doctrine of religious liberty.”

Mr. Armitage, in his *History of the Baptists*, Page 454, says that "This church was the first now known to take positive ground in favor of the salvation of all infants who die in their infancy, from the time that Augustine taught the detestable doctrine that unbaptized infants who die in their infancy are not admitted into heaven."

The Act of Toleration

Woods says, "William III was declared king February 13, 1689. A law was soon enacted in favor of dissenters, which has generally been distinguished by appellation, 'Act of Toleration.'" ¹² By this act legal persecution of dissenters stopped, and some regards were paid the right of conscience; nonconformists obtained liberty to worship God without exposing themselves to civil penalties.

This, it would seem, should have been an ideal condition for all kinds of religion to thrive in. Liberty to worship God at any time and any place that you wished to serve Him, it seems, should have brought about all kinds of prosperity in religious service; but, in this case, right the reverse was true.

Up to the passage of this act, the General Baptists had established churches in every county in England; that one little church had grown into many, many churches; quite a number of associations had been formed. Now it seems that they should grow by leaps and bounds; but it seems that both General and Particular Baptists flourished more greatly before this act was passed.

Mr. Vedder says on this point: "Few people have borne the ordeal of persecution better than the English Baptists; but for a century after the passage of the Act of Toleration, it seemed that they were unable to bear freedom. In the history of Christianity it has often happened that the people of God have grown marvelously in spite of opposition and persecution, but have languished in times of comparative prosperity—that a sect that fire and sword could not

¹² Woods, *History of Baptists*, p. 145.

suppress had degenerated or finally disappeared when every external hindrance to prosperity had been removed.”¹³

“The English Baptists were to furnish instance of that kind. After 1698 they were given a measure of toleration such as they had never known in England—since it was toleration secured and clearly defined by law, not given by the arbitrary will of one man. There was no external obstacle to their making rapid, continuous and solid growth. Every indication pointed toward a career of uninterrupted progress and prosperity. Yet fifty years after the passage of this act, the Baptists of England were scarcely more numerous than they were at the accession of William III, while as a spiritual power they had dwindled to a painful state of deadness and inefficiency.”

The liberty which was granted the churches opened the way for corruption. Only the genuine metal can stand the refiner’s fire. Dross and other impurities soon disappear in the fire. Persecution acted as a refiner’s fire to the dissenters; hypocrites and men of impure minds and hearts could never stand the fiery persecution through which the early brethren had to pass. But the fire of persecution had no sooner ceased than the dross began to gather and to infuse itself into the mass of true metal; so all religious denominations in England were soon filled with corruption.

On this point Mr. Cramp says: “The Baptist (General and Particular) interest in England fell into decline after the revolution. Liberty did not bring life. The sunshine had for a time a withering effect. And again, the backsliding and coldness had affected all religious communities in England.”¹⁴

Mr. Vedder, after describing the corruption and darkness that filled the country at this time and how it came about, says that it was a gross, thick, religious and moral darkness—a darkness that might be felt. He then sums it all up by saying, “Religion

¹³ Vedder, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Cramp, *op. cit.*, pp. 484-500.

never sank to so low an ebb in England as during the first half of the eighteenth century.”¹⁵

Extreme Arminianism and Arianism crept into the ranks of the General Baptists. Many of the leaders among them saw the defection and cried out against it. Investigations were put on in the associations and the general assembly to expose it and in an effort to purge the body of the evil. Several years were spent in dissension and wrangling, all without accomplishing the reformation desired. Finally those leaders who were striving to rid the old organization of the evils that had crept in were convinced that their efforts were futile and resolved to bring about new organizations that would place the denomination back on the principles upon which it was founded in the beginning.

New Connection of General Baptists

Benedict, in his *History of the Baptists*, says: “This name was given in 1770 to that portion of this community who were unwilling any longer to bear with the lax opinions and loose manner of discipline of a large portion of the General Baptists. The measure had long been in contemplation, but was retarded by the unwillingness of many to hazard the consequences of a division of a denomination so venerable for its age, and so endeared to them by many ties of fraternal affection. The great object of the new measure, as set forth in their preamble, was to “. . . revive experimental religion or promitive Christianity in faith and practice.”¹⁶

The old body continued to exist through the years; but losing continually in numbers and influence, its existence has been almost without significance. It has lost ministers and membership continually, as well as churches, which went to the reformed body mentioned above.

A Great Revival

The student of history will remember the splendid revival that

¹⁵ Vedder, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ Benedict, *op. cit.*

was set in motion by the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield in the last half of the eighteenth century; this great revival swept over all England and America and shook England from center to circumference; all religious movements in that country were affected by it, even the Church of England.

The old lethargy and cold formality that had controlled religious services for so long was swept away and out of the churches; new spiritual life and vitality were infused into them. New leaders were put in charge of the state church in England and most all religious movements, and also in the government of that country. The result of that reformation is yet apparent in that nation today.

Vedder, speaking of this revival, says: "It is superfluous to say that the Baptists in England participated in the benefits of this second reformation. With it begins a new era in their history, an era of growth, of zeal, of missionary activity, which gave them a leading place among the nonconformists of England.

"While this is true of all of the Baptist churches, perhaps the most immediate and striking results of the Wesleyan movement may be traced in the growth of the General Baptists."¹⁷ He then gives an account of the conversion, call to the ministry and religious life of Dan Taylor, saying, "The progress of the New Connection was due almost wholly to Dan Taylor. He was the life and soul of the movement. Everything he set his hand to prospered; when he took his hand away, things languished. . . . His body seemed incapable of fatigue, and his labors were herculean. If anything demanded doing, he was ready to do it; did an association need a circular letter to the churches, he wrote it; was a minister in demand for a sermon, a charge, or any other service from Berwick-on-Tweed to Lands end, Dan Taylor was on hand.

"He led in the establishment of the fund for the education of ministers, in 1796, and was principal of the academy—or, as we would say nowadays, theological seminary—established for that purpose in 1798. He edited the General Baptist Magazine; he traveled up and down in England, traversing, it is said, 25,000

¹⁷ Vedder, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

miles mostly on foot. And he preached constantly; a sermon every night and three on Sunday were his ordinary allowance, and on special occasions he preached several times a day. Even the labors of John Wesley are equaled, if not surpassed, by this record . . .

"Dan Taylor fell asleep in his seventy-eighth year, and the phrase almost literally describes his end, for it happened suddenly, without a groan or a sigh, while sitting in his chair. His work was well done, and English Baptists still feel the result of his manly piety and zealous labors."¹⁸

Distinguished Leaders

We have just mentioned Dan Taylor and given a brief account of his work. He was the first real leader among the New Connection. They, however, had a number of leaders among them who rendered splendid service to the cause of God; we will have space to mention only a few.

John Foster (1787-1843): He was born at Halifax, Yorkshire, England, September 17, 1770; died at Stapleton, October 15, 1843. He entered the ministry at the age of 17 and spent a great part of his life in pastoral work. While at Downend he wrote the essays which Sanford says in his *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ". . . won for him the reputation of being one of the most profound and eloquent writers that England has produced." He wrote on several subjects. The movement prospered during his lifetime.

Robert Hall, Andrew Fuller and William Carey (1770-1825): These men were not affiliated with the General Baptist movement directly, but they were great leaders and did our cause and movement as much good as any other three men during this age. Vedder, a Calvinistic historian, says of Fuller that he ". . . was first of all mighty with the pen," and he was ". . . one of the most widely read and influential theological writers of England or America." Then he says, "Fuller boldly accepted and advocated a doctrine of

¹⁸ Vedder, op, cit., p. 247.

the atonement that, until his day, had always been stigmatized as rank Arminianism, viz., that the atonement of Christ, as to its worth and dignity, was sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and was not an offering for the elect alone, as Calvinists of all grades had hitherto maintained." The reader can very easily imagine the effect of such a statement as that coming from an influential member of the Calvinistic Baptists. Vedder continues, ". . . and this modified Calvinism gradually made its way among Baptists until it has become well-nigh the only doctrine known among them."

Vedder says of William Carey: "But most important of these results that may be directly traced to the Wesleyan revival remains to be described. The man destined to do more than any other toward the regeneration of English Baptists, and to be an inspiration to all other Christians, was some years younger than Andrew Fuller. This was William Carey. He was born in 1761, not of Baptist parentage; on the contrary, his father, an old-school churchman, had bred his son in holy horror of all Dissenters. But Carey heard the gospel preached, he was convicted of sin, and converted, and like most young converts, took to reading his Bible with new zest . . . Carey soon learned (from the Bible) what a Christian church ought to be and what a converted man ought to do. He not only saw his duty, but he did it, though it required him to join himself to certain of the despised dissenters. He was baptized on profession of faith, in the river Neu, October 5, 1783, by Dr. John Ryland."

Carey was not only baptized; he received the call to the ministry, and his study of the Scriptures in connection with his call to preach gave him a definite conviction that the gospel should be preached to the heathen; to him the call and responsibility to the church today was the same as the commission given to the apostles, "Preach the gospel to all nations . . . to every creature"; and a definite burden rested upon his heart for the heathen who knew not Christ and was dying in sin. He talked it to everyone and preached it every time he got an opportunity. This view was for-

eign to the Calvinistic theology. So, on one occasion, when he was pleading with his brethren to do something about preaching the gospel to the heathen, Dr. Ryland, a prominent Calvinistic Baptist preacher, the man who baptized him, said, "Sit down young man; when the Lord gets ready to convert the heathen, He will do it without your help or mine." This statement of Dr. Ryland was Calvinism in a nutshell, and it is evident that Carey did not believe it at all; and he kept on preaching the contrary, which was the Arminian or Free Will doctrine, and became the recognized founder of the *foreign mission* idea, especially among Baptists. He and Fuller, together with the General Baptists of the time, broke the back of Calvinism both in England and America.

The Baptist Union was one of the direct results of these efforts. It was formed in 1832, and was incorporated in 1892. It was formed to provide an organization through which all Baptists could carry on any work that might be for the common good of all. The Free Baptist Cyclopedia said of this Union in 1888, that four fifths of the 2,000 churches in its fellowship at the time were General Baptist in everything but name. This was said before the General Baptists became a member; they began to work through that body in 1891.

We will now give you a brief history of the lives of Dr. Alexander McClaren and Dr. John Clifford, two leading English Baptist ministers who appeared at a later date in English Baptist history. And in order to indicate to you that they are entitled to a place here, I make the following quotation from the pen of Dr. Lasher, senior editor of *The Journal and Messenger*, a very creditable regular Baptist journal, published in Philadelphia. He says: "Dr. Clifford on the other hand, has always been affiliated with the General Baptists. . . . Dr. McClaren of Manchester, who has occupied virtually the same position with Dr. Clifford and the Baptist Union, the organization through which English Baptists express themselves to the world, is committed fully to this mixed membership in the churches."¹⁹

19 Lasher, *idem.*, vol. 76, no. 34, p. 6.

He says further: "And some of our Baptist exchanges seem to be very much disgusted, and ready to read Dr. Meyer out of the denomination. But hold! Dr. Meyer is just as good a Baptist as is Dr. John Clifford, or Alexander McClaren, or Dr. C. F. Akid of New York, or the Baptist Union of Great Britain, of which he is president. They are in the same boat, floating downstream so quietly that they themselves hardly take the notice of their progress. And they have companions in another little boat here in America. They are all *Open Communionists*, and are just where we shall all be in a short time, if we keep on at the present rate."²⁰

Alexander McClaren: "The greatest of living preachers has died." These were the words of *The Arkansas Baptist*, the organ of the Landmark Baptists at that time, and are very appropriate as introductory of the life sketch of the distinguished Baptist minister mentioned above who died in Edenburg, June, 1910.

He was born at Glasgow, Scotland, February 11, 1826, and was therefore eighty-four years old. He was baptized at the age of fifteen and became a candidate for the ministry at the age of sixteen; he entered Stepney College the same year.

At the close of his course he received a bachelor of arts degree in London University, and won the prize for proficiency in Greek and Hebrew. His first public service as a preacher was before an audience of seven persons.

His first pastorate was in Portland Chapel at Southampton. Speaking of this, his first field of labor, at a public breakfast gathering, he said: "I thank God that I was stuck down in a quiet little obscure place to begin my ministry, for that is what spoils half of the young preachers; they get pitchforked into prominent positions at once, and then fritter themselves away in all manner of little engagements that they call duties, going to this tea meeting and to that anniversary and the other breakfast celebration, instead of stopping at home and reading their Bible and getting nearer God. I thank God for the early days and struggle and obscurity."

²⁰ Lasher, *idem.*, vol. 76, no. 34, p. 6.

He continued his pastorate at Southampton for eleven years, growing all the time in pulpit power and extending the sphere of his influence continually.

In 1858 he became pastor of the Union Chapel in Manchester and continued this pastorate till 1903—forty-five years—at which time he laid down his pastoral work. *The Interior* said, “When he laid down his pastorate in 1903, he stood in the very forefront of the preachers in all churches.”

Besides being a great and successful preacher, he was a great writer. Published volumes of his sermons may be found in the library of most any leading minister of all the world. And through these and his expository notes on the International Sunday School Lessons, and to his contribution to the expositor’s Bible, he became known in all lands.

Speaking of his style, *The Interior* says, “In beautiful and forceful language, in keen analysis, in poetical and practical treatment of a text, he was unrivaled.”

The Arkansas Baptist says of him: “Alexander McClaren was the pride of the whole city of Manchester, and was a great power for righteousness. He was a scholar of great repute, and as an expositor of the Scriptures he was surpassed by none. His style was classic. He was the most eloquent preacher not only in England, but in the world; he was a most winning personality, warmly loved by all.” At his death he was preparing a work entitled *Expositions of the Holy Scriptures*. It was to cover the whole Bible and to be divided into 30 volumes. Eighteen volumes had been issued.

Dr. John Clifford: Dr. Clifford was born in 1836, and was still alive in 1910; We don’t happen to know of his death. In his boyhood he was a lace manufacturer, and his early education was quite neglected. He began preaching at the age of fifteen, and at the age of nineteen he entered the Midland Baptist College. He was full of impetuous life and energy.

At the age of twenty-two he accepted a pastorate in London with the understanding that he should be free to pursue a course

of study in the London University, which he did with such marvelous success that he came to be recognized as one of the foremost scholars, gaining the highest degrees, and on final examination he obtained the degree of B. A., B. Sc., M. A., and LL. B.

In 1858 he became pastor of the church on Praed Street, since which time he continually rose in the estimation of the public, and his influence increased until he was recognized as leader among the great leaders in the struggle over the tax and school question of which we have spoken heretofore.

Dr. Clifford was president of the Baptist World Alliance in 1910, which indicated his standing in the world field of Baptists. Dr. Lasher says of him, that "Perhaps he is today (1907) the most conspicuous gospel minister in England"; he says further, "Dr. Clifford has won his distinction by long years of conspicuous service in a London congregation whose interprises are very numerous and whose pastor is easily leader in the present (1904) contest between the established church and the free churches on the educational question." He further says that Dr. Clifford has proven himself worthy of all honors bestowed upon him, and they are many.

Dr. Freeman of Toronto, Canada, in his address on education before the World Congress, called him hero, prophet, patriot, and in real fact the prime minister of Great Britain.

Dr. Clifford and his church belonged to the Baptist Union; prior to the formation of the Union, he was affiliated with the General or Freewill Baptist element of Great Britain.

Baptist Denominations in England in Modern Times

Having thus given briefly the history of the English General Baptists, and having hurriedly passed over a century and a half of their religious life, we will now attempt to give our readers a glimpse of that people at or near the present time.

Our readers will recall, we are sure, that at the close of the period referred to above, our English General Baptists were in two

groups or organizations—The old General Baptists and the New Connection of General Baptists. They today exist in two organizations, but the Old General Baptist group has gradually dwindled away to the point that they are insignificant—do not amount to a great deal. The New Connection group has continually grown in numbers and influence until it plays a valuable part in activities of the Baptists in England.

The Particular Baptists were the second oldest denomination of Baptists, having begun in 1633-1641. We noticed, in closing the history of the early period, that they were also divided into two factions: the Hyper-Calvinists and Moderate Calvinists. And the same thing has happened to them that we found true of the General Baptists: the Hyper-Calvinist faction which was the older of the two groups, has dwindled down to almost insignificance, and the Moderates have continually grown in number and influence. The Moderates have moderated until there is very little difference, if any, in them and the General Baptists.

Upon this point (differences in Baptists of England) we will now give the reader some quotations from other authorities, some of them from Regular Baptists in this country. The first quotation is from The American Encyclopedic Dictionary: "The English Baptists were divided until recently into Baptists, General Baptists, and Strict Baptists. The latter (Strict Baptists) were Calvinistic in teaching and strongly opposed to admitting any but baptized believers to the fellowship of the church, or to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Strict Baptists are only few in number and are fast passing away. The General Baptists are Arminian in teaching."²¹

From this quotation, the reader will see that the English Baptists are divided on points of doctrine and practice other than Calvinism; like in this country, they are also divided on the communion question; and upon that point we quote you from a Regular Baptist, Dr. Lasher, D. D., LL. D., senior editor of the *Journal and Messenger*: "There are three kinds of Baptist churches

21 American Encyclopedia Dictionary, vol. I, p. 379.

(denominations) in England (1) Those of open membership; (2) those of close membership and open communion, and (3) those of close membership and close communion. The open membership churches, such as Dr. Clifford's, Dr. McLaren's and others receive the baptized, the sprinkled, and the neither baptized nor sprinkled to membership on the same footing. . . . The close membership and open communion churches require all who become members of the church to be baptized, but receive to the Lord's table any who choose to come if they profess to believe in Christ and are not known to be wicked. . . . The third class (the close Baptists) is composed of churches practicing according to the Baptists of this country. But these are the weak and un-influential, their existence is hardly known beyond their own towns and villages."²²

Again we quote Dr. Lasher: "We have no reason to doubt the thoroughly Christian character of our brethren who call themselves Baptists in Great Britain. Our impression is that they as carefully examine those who come to them respecting their Christian experience, the reason for their profession of hope in Christ, as do any of our churches, and they are probably more thorough than are some among us. But a considerable number, if not a majority of their churches, are nullifying what another portion of them holds of prime importance after assurance of faith; namely the rite which is implied in their name.

"It has been said that in the very beginning of the Baptist movement (in England) in the early part of the seventeenth century the question of communion was not raised. Those who embraced the Anabaptist view had enough to think of, so that they did not stop to formulate any rule relative to the Supper of the Lord. It was not till the days of William Kiffin and Elias Keach, in 1641-1643, that those who composed the seven churches in London and vicinity began to see that the logic of their position on baptism compelled restriction in the matter of the Lord's Supper. The earlier, or General Baptists, flocked by themselves,

²² Lasher, *op. cit.*, vol. 70, no. 12, p. 9.

and the Particular and more consistent Baptists flocked by themselves. The General Baptists were Arminian in doctrine while the Particular Baptists were Calvinistic, or Pauline. Up to 20 years ago the distinction between these two classes was kept in view. The General Baptists were in sympathy with the Free Will Baptists in this country, while the Particulars were in closer sympathy with the Regular Baptists here.

"Each of these classes had its own missionary organization, and there was only an occasional passing of ministers from one of them to the other. But, some ten or fifteen years ago, a union was effected, and nearly all of the churches became associated with the same organization, though a few of the Particulars still stood out and refused to affiliate with the Baptist Union."

Dr. Lasher goes on to say that Mr. Spurgeon occupied a position rather midway between the two parties, and then says, "Dr. Clifford has always been affiliated with the General Baptists. . . . Dr. McLaren of Manchester has virtually occupied the same position with Dr. Clifford and the Baptist Union, the organization through which English Baptists express themselves to the world . . ."

One more quotation on this point from a work entitled *What the World Believes*: "The Baptists at the present time occupy the foremost position among dissenters in England. Rev. Mr. Douglas, a clergyman of the Established Church, has recently written of them: 'It is a fact the Baptists have been growing in recent years in a more rapid ratio than any of their neighbors. In London and neighborhood the increase of Baptist chapels within, say fifteen years, has been out of all proportions to previous growth. Their rate of increase is twice that of the Independents, and three times that of the Wesleysans.'

We do not believe, in a word, that we would be far from the truth were we to say that the most promising and extending denomination in England at this moment is the body of Christians of which we speak."

Church Life in England

In order to give some insight to church life in England, we give place to quotations from the pens of Thomas A. T. Hanna and Henry F. Colby which appeared in the *Journal and Messenger*.

Dr. Hanna says: "A little time spent in the midst of a grand assembly of British Baptists was to me a new experience, and perhaps the record of it may be of some use to American Baptists.

"The autumnal meetings were held in the city of Bristol in the first week in October. About sixteen hundred requests for entertainment were received by the committee and all were provided for. Christians of all gospel churches united in welcoming the Baptists to their homes.

"The railroads issued return tickets at a fare and a quarter, and did it with a minimum of red tape. . . . That history (English Baptist) is, from the Scriptural point of view, an eminently glorious one, and the city of Bristol can remind us of it in many ways." The writer here mentions the career of Spurgeon and Bunyan and other heroes, and then says, "Who among American Baptists knows that there are twenty or more Baptist churches in Bristol; that the largest congregation in the city belongs to them; that the history of our cause is illuminated with some of the grandest names enrolled in our annuals, such as Ryland, Robert Hall, John Foster, Culross and others."²³

Dr. Colby, speaking along the same line, says: "The Baptists of London have reasons to congratulate themselves on the fine new buildings now occupied by them on Southampton Row, near Holburn. Here are the denominational headquarters, where Rev. J. H. Shakespeare (surely a name easily remembered), the Secretary of the Baptist Union, presides. . . .

"The Baptist church house, as they call it, contains a spacious visitors' parlor, with papers and writing materials and a large room for a library already containing some valuable collections. Not so

²³ Lasher, *idem.*, vol 74, no. 9.

much attention, however, seems to have been given to Baptist church history in England as with us.

"The Foreign Missionary rooms we should expect to find in the same building; they, however, remain where they have long been, in Furnival Street not far away. There the secretary of the society, Rev. M. Barnes, received us cordially, as he always does his brethren from our side of the water.

"The Regents Park Baptist Church, and the Bloomsbury Street Church, which have been two of the most important, are each without a pastor. . . . In the former, where Dr. Landells preached so long, I heard an excellent sermon from Mr. Wolfenden, formerly pastor in America, now at Sheffield.

"The audience room is shaped like a fan, and the pulpit stands in the center, an imposing piece of architecture rising like a candlestick. It would require an immense man to correspond with its proportions. The high pews, the umbrella racks outside each pew door, and the absence of anything churchly in the exterior of the building, strike the attention of the American.

"The Bloomsbury Church looks more like our churches; but several prominent places of worship of our denomination in England lack anything like a tower or spire. People of the Established Church call them chapels. . . . For a long time nonconformists could not afford to put money into architecture, but they are doing it now."

Then he says, "How different the scene which on the following Sunday morning greeted our eyes as we stepped into the Broadmead Baptist Chapel in the city of Bristol! You would not think of any ecclesiastical pretensions as you approached the building, but within was a light, attractive audience room with organ and galleries. A large congregation assembled. The singing was by a full choir, and the congregation largely joined. It was Harvest Sunday. The communion table was laden with offerings of vegetables and fruit to be given to the poor on the morrow. There was every evidence of a warm spiritual church, and the whole as-

pect of the occasion reminded us of the fresh, throbbing, earnest, practical people of today, waiting on God for his truth and grace. . . . The Baptists of Bristol have several churches. Here, too, is the well-known Bristol Baptist College."

The Baptist World Congress, Henceforth to Be Called the Baptist World Alliance

One of the greatest religious meetings ever held in the world met in the Exeter Hall, London, Tuesday, July 11, 1905. Four thousand messengers, representing between six and seven million church members, assembled together there. Every part of the world, except Palestine and Java was represented.

Judge Willis, president of the Baptist Union of England, the host organization, presided as temporary chairman.

The messenger roll call was by countries, and some one of the messengers responded in a short speech; after which the messengers from that country rose in a body and sang a verse of some song, or recited a verse of poetry in their home language.

Elder Curtis Lec Law, D. D., spoke for the Southern Baptists of the United States, and Latham A. Crandall, D. D., who was once a Free Will Baptist, spoke for the Northern Baptists.

Alexander McClaren, D. D., M. A., LL. D., was selected as permanent presiding officer, and Dr. Prestige as vice-moderator; J. H. Shakespcare, D. D., was chosen secretary.

Dr. McClaren made the introductory speech, and in it of course stated the purpose of the meeting. The Doctor was in his eightieth year and it was said that he looked remarkably well in point of health; he spoke with exceptional clearness and force. He said that if they chose to elect to the office of president a man who had entered upon his sixtieth pastorate, they must excuse him if he only addressed the congress briefly.

"What," he asked, "was the congress being held for? to glory in their denominational strength? to rejoice in looking one another in the face and asking of their welfare? to demonstrate to the

world what they were, and what they stood for? Yes, all these," he answered, but he desired, that morning, to take their "thoughts for a few moments to deeper things." He would speak to them of two Crystals—"In the name of Christ," and "By the power of the Spirit." There he touched the bedrock, the bottom of everything; and all would be right, if they were right in these two relations—the relation to the living Christ, the relation to the indwelling Spirit; and, that all would be wrong, however orthodox, or earnest, or learned, or up to date, or wise in methods their churches might be, if these things failed to be at the bottom of it all.

A number of able addresses followed that of Dr. McClaren. Dr. J. D. Freeman of Toronto, Canada, spoke on "The Place of Baptists in the Christian Church." Mr. D. Lloyd George, M. P., made a stirring speech on "National Primary Education."

The Congress was henceforth to be known as The Baptist World Alliance. Dr. John Clifford was chosen as presiding officer of the Alliance until its next regular meeting which was to be held at Philadelphia, United States of America, in 1911. Assistants were chosen for the various countries composing the alliance. J. H. Shakespeare and Dr. Prestrige were chosen as secretaries.

Any general union, convention or association is eligible for membership in the alliance, or was at the time of this meeting. The management of the affairs of the alliance are in the hands of an executive committee consisting of the officers and twenty-one additional members—seven from the United States, five from Great Britain, two from Canada, and seven from the rest of the world. This committee was assisted by an advisory committee.

On the point of Free Will Baptists' being eligible, we make this quotation from Dr. Lasher, "It (the alliance) is to bear the name *Baptist*, and that seems to exclude immersionists who refuse to be called by that name. But it must take in Free Will, or Free Baptists in this country as it does in Great Britain. Dr. John Clifford, the first president (permanent), was affiliated with the

Free Will element of the islands, before the merging of so many of all stripes into the Baptist Union.”²⁴

Last Words from Dr. John Clifford

We will now close our narrative of the history of the English Baptists with quotations from a letter written by Dr. John Clifford dated November 16, 1911. This letter will corroborate many positions we have taken in this history and will introduce us to the American Baptists, and give us a brief sketch of matters leading up to the formation of the Baptist Union in Great Britain:

“The Free Baptists I have known from my boyhood. It was my good fortune to start my Christian life amongst the General Baptists of this country (England); and it was the custom of the ‘Generals’ of England and the Free Will Baptists of the states to interchange communications, and to appoint delegates to each other’s conventions. In that way I came into touch with the leaders of the Free Baptists fifty years ago; heard their speeches and felt the inspiration of American Baptist life and movement. That was my introduction to the United States as a youth, and to the Baptist world within the states.

“The story of the meeting in the Ford building in Boston, Massachusetts (the place where the Baptists and Free Baptists met and consummated the merger), stirs many memories on which I would fain dilate, such as the figure of Eli Noyes; or D. M. Graham, Professor Anthony and others; but I must only recall the fact of the union of the ‘Generals’ and ‘Particulars’ of Great Britain in the year 1891. . . .

“For nearly two centuries they moved along separate lines, only now and then touching one another in debate, and rarely in fraternal co-operation. At length, owing to changes in theological outlook, they thought more graciously of one another; then at far-parted points in the geographical field of operations they frater-

nized; next transferred members from one to the other, and interchanged pastors; and at length in 1891 the two became one, and have marched together in happy and joyful union for twenty years.”²⁵

²⁵ Watchman, November 16, 1911.

CHAPTER 2

ARMINIAN, GENERAL, OR FREE WILL
BAPTISTS IN AMERICA

(Roger Williams Branch)

We found in studying the Baptist history in England, that the first Baptist churches were of the Arminian, General, or Free Will type of Baptists; and when we come to study Baptist history in America, we find the same thing is true; the first Baptist churches in this homeland of ours were of the same type. Authentic history is almost unanimous on that point.

Wood says, "They were unanimous in rejecting the Calvinistic doctrines, and were in fact a body of General Baptist churches, and as such had correspondence with the General Baptists of England."

Benedict says, "They were generally inclined to those doctrinal sentiments which, in England, would have denominated them General Baptists." We could multiply quotations of the same kind, but will let this suffice at this time.

The type of Baptists of which we are writing had four points of origin in this country, and we will treat each of these as separate branches of the same people. The first in point of time was the Roger Williams branch; some historians refer to them as the Old Rhode Island Association of Sixth Principle Baptists. The second in point of time was that association or body of General or Free Will Baptists located in Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. The third point of origin in time was the Randall movement located largely in New England. The fourth body in point of origin was that body known as Free Communion Baptists, located mostly in Connecticut and New York. Each of these branches knew very little if anything at all about the other branches at the time of their beginning.

We will give brief history of the Roger Williams movement first; a brief history of the Randal movement second; a brief ac-

count of the Free Baptist (Free Communion Baptist) movement next; and a brief history of the Free Will Baptist movement in the South last. Our reason for this is that the Randall movement and Free Baptist movement merged together as soon as they properly learned of each other's existence; and the greater part of this book will be used in giving the history of the Free Will Baptists of the South. We will therefore let it come last.

The Roger Williams Branch of General or Free Will Baptists

Roger Williams was to the Baptist movement in America what John Smyth was to that movement in England. Smyth was a very learned man and was very conscientious; he was therefore a great help to the Baptist brethren in formulating their doctrine and organization at the beginning.

Roger Williams was pretty well educated, very much experienced in matters of government and thoroughly conscientious. He naturally believed in the doctrine of religious liberty; his knowledge of the effort put forth by the English General Baptists to obtain that liberty, and the arguments used by them in their petitions to the government in England for their relief, filled his soul full of fire to bring about some relief for those who were being persecuted for their religion.

Despairing of ever having religious liberty in England, he came to America in search of such a place; but instead of finding liberty to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, he met persecution from those who had at one time left England because of persecution. And because they could not mold him to their own wishes, they banished him from their country; and to keep from being sent back to England, he fled to the wilderness in wild America as it was at that time.

Hawthorne says: "Williams' journey through the pathless snows and frosts of an exceptionally severe winter is one of the picturesque episodes of the time. During more than three months

he pursued his lonely and perilous way; hollow trees were a welcome shelter; he lacked fire, food and guides. But he had always pleaded in behalf of the Indians; he had learned their language, and all this now stood him in good stead.

"The man who was an outcast from the society of his white brethren, because his soul was purer and stronger than theirs, was received and ministered unto by the savages. He knew their way, was familiar in their wigwams, championed their rights, wrestled lovingly with their errors, mediated in their quarrels, and was idolized by them as no other of his race.

"Chiefs Pokanoket, Massasoit, and Canonicus were his hosts and guardians during the winter and spring. In the summer he descended the river in a birchbark canoe to the site of the present city of Providence; so named by him in recognition of the divine mercies; and there he pitched his tent beside the spring hoping to make the place a shelter for persons distressed for conscience.

"His desire was amply fulfilled. The chiefs of the Narragansetts deeded him a large tract of land; oppressed persons flocked to him for comfort and succor, and never in vain; a republic grew up based upon liberty of conscience, and the civil rule of the majority; the first in the world."¹

Williams had authority from two nonconformist bodies to do ministerial work, and had worked in that capacity among them at times; but he could not agree with them in their practice of persecuting those who did not see and do in religious matters as they did. He also had serious doubts concerning baptism by sprinkling and pouring and the baptism of infants; and now in this new home which God had given him, he was free to follow such a course in government and religion as he understood the Bible to teach. So he first organized a government as indicated above and then proceeded to introduce in this new government that form of church work which he believed the Word of God to set forth.

1. Hawthorne, *History of the United States*.

The First Baptist Church in the New World

Hiscox says, "In 1639, Mr. Williams received baptism from one of his associates, there being no other minister to perform that service." (From another author in *What the World Believes* we learn that Williams was baptized by Ezckiel Holliman, deputy governor, and he in turn baptized ten others.) Hiscox continues, "He in turn baptized his associates and a church was organized, of which he was chosen pastor. . . ."²

Free toleration was granted in matters of religion. Thus Roger Williams became the first ruler and Rhode Island, the first state which ever gave entire freedom to every person to worship God according to his own choice, without dictation or interference from civil or ecclesiastical authorities. On account of this unrestricted toleration, many Baptists, as well as other persecuted religionists from other colonies and from Europe, collected in considerable numbers at Providence and spread through the colony.

What the World Believes says, "Thus was founded, under Roger Williams, as governor of Rhode Island, and Ezekiel Holliman, deputy governor, the first Baptist church on the continent of America.

"To these members twelve others were soon added; and from that day to this, that church has been a burning and a shining light."³

Sanford's *Cyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, speaking of this incident, says, "These twelve formed the first Baptist church in America."⁴

Statements like this could be given by different authors time and again; but we will let this suffice now. This church was formed upon the basis and principles of religious liberty as set forth and fought for by the English General Baptists in and about London for several years. But was it an Arminian or Calvinistic Baptist church?

2 Hiscox, *op. cit.*

3 *What the World Believes*, p. 501.

4. Sanford's *Cyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, p. 82.

Up to this time, and a few years beyond this time, there was very little discrimination among the Baptists concerning this point. It seems that this point of difference was not raised until a few years later. The first Calvinistic Baptist church did not come into existence fully as a Calvinistic church until about the year 1641, in England; and soon after that time historians began to note the distinction among Baptist people and Baptist churches as to whether they were Calvinistic or Arminian. There were no Calvinistic Baptist churches in England recognized as such before 1641. All churches in England before this date were recognized as General or Free Will Baptists.

Division in the First Church

It is evident, however, that this question was raised in this church at or near 1652; for at that time there was a division in the church, and Mr. Vedder in his *Short History of Baptists* says, "All that is certain is that controversy began and continued until it reached the acute stage in 1652, when the church was divided. A part, the smaller, apparently, adhered to the original faith of the church and remained under the pastoral care of Thomas Olney. This wing of the church became extinct somewhere about 1720. The larger part of the members adhered to Wickenden, Brown, and Dexter, and became a Sixth Principle church, remaining such until a comparatively late time. In 1771, through the influence of President James Manning, the majority adopted a Calvinistic creed, whereupon the Sixth Principle minority seceded. Both these branches still survive, the former now bearing the title of the First Baptist Church of Providence. But all these matters (concerning the Providence Church) are doubtful since the earliest records of the Providence Church begin with the year 1775."⁵

A dissension began in the church in 1771, caused by Professor Manning who influenced some of the churches to adopt a Calvinistic creed; but the withdrawal did not occur until 1774, and that is why the records of the present Providence Church begin with the

⁵ Vedder, *op. cit.*, pp. 292, 293.

year 1775. In 1774, 86 members of that old Roger Williams Church with the pastor of that church, Rev. Samuel Winsor Jr., withdrew into the town of Johnston, just across the line of Providence and continued services there until 1830. In that year William C. Manchester who was then pastor of the Roger Williams Church, with the church, moved back to the city of Providence and erected a building on Burgess Street in which they worshiped for twenty-five years. That building was destroyed and a new building was erected on the corner of Knight and Westminister Streets, in which building they worship today.

July 28 to August 3, 1907, was celebrated by the church as Old Home Week. Professor A. W. Anthony and Rev. James W. Williams, both descendents of Roger Williams, were present at the home-coming. Mrs. Lena S. Fenner, secretary of the church historical committee, prepared a paper from the records of the church, tracing the history of the church to the organization of the first Baptist church in America. The periods of history of the church as given by Mrs. Fenner, were as follows:

“(1) From the organization by Roger Williams of the First Baptist church in America, 1638, to the pastorate of Elder Samuel Winsor Jr. in 1771—133 years. (2) From the withdrawal of Elder Winsor and 86 others and the building of a new church house over the city line in the town of Johnston, in 1774, to the pastorate of Elder William C. Manchester in 1830—59 years. (3) From the abandonment of the Johnston edifice in 1830, and migrating back to Providence by Elder Manchester and his followers, to the destruction of the Burgess Street meeting house in 1855—25 years. (4) From the building of the present edifice on the corner of Knight and Westminister Streets (1855) under the pastorate of the late G. H. Ball, D. D., to the present time—52 years. In all, 269 years.”⁶ When Elder Winsor and the brethren moved to the town of Johnston and began service from then on they called the church the Roger Williams Church because they thought that to be so.

⁶ The Morning Star, August, 1907.

And it was so, if the reader will just analyze and study the statement of Mr. Vedder. When in the formation of the church in the consideration as to who should be members, it was not questioned as to whether one was Arminian or Calvinistic, both kinds of Baptists were included in the membership. But the discrimination did come when they divided the first time. The church was then in two branches: the Olney branch and the Wickenden branch. These were at first both parts of the original church. The Olney branch became extinct, ceased to exist, and that left the Wickenden as the only part of the church in existence. In the division in 1774, the Manning branch could not have been the original church, for it was on a different foundation; it was on or had a Calvinistic creed and was a Calvinistic church; whereas the church which Manning found when he came there was an Arminian church. But the church that moved to Johnston, composed of Elder Winsor and the 86 members, was on the same foundation and in fact was in every respect without changing in any way the original. It had the same foundation, the same doctrine, the same pastor—in fact was the same church.

Mr. Vedder was in doubt about this matter. He says, "Tradition maintains that the line of succession has been unbroken, but the records to prove this are lacking. The facts appear to be that after the departure of Williams, one of those whom he baptized, Thomas Olney, became the head of the church, to which was added soon a number of newcomers, chief among which were William Wickenden, Chad Brown and Gregory Dexter. . . . It has been conjectured that the three men named were associated with Olney in a plural leadership, but all these matters are doubtful since the earliest records of the Providence Church begin with the year 1775, and back of that we have only tradition and conjecture." This statement is true when applied to the present Calvinistic Providence Church; but the records of the Roger Williams Church, that part of the old church that would not submit to Calvinism but withdrew and kept a continuous service on down through the

years to at least the year 1907, remained Arminian. They have a continuous church record to at least July, 1907.

This church became a member of the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of Free Will Baptists in 1857, and was thus the oldest Free Will Baptist church in America. It was a Free Will Baptist church all the time in doctrine and practice, and became affiliated or associated with them about as early as it was convenient. We can't see why any Free Will Baptist that has any love for the denomination will thoughtlessly, or worse, carelessly, throw away this point in their favor of history.

More Churches Like the Above

Churches like the one organized at Providence were multiplied, such as the Second Church at Newport, formed in 1656, which has been Arminian in doctrine and open in communion ever since its formation. In Rhode Island are the North Kingston, formed in 1665; the South Kingston, in 1680; the Smithfield, 1706; the Sictuac, 1725; East Greenwich, 1743; Fulling Mill, 1785; Burrelville, 1749; Cranston, 1764; Coventry, 1768; Foster 1780; Gloucester the Second, 1816.

In Massachusetts: Dartmouth, 1684; Swansea, 1693. Of this last named church Mr. John Callender, one of its pastors, says, "Union with Christ was the sole ground of their communion with each other, and they were ready to receive and to hold church communion with all such as, in the judgment of charity, were fellow members with Christ Jesus, though differing in such controversial points as are not absolutely and essentially necessary to salvation." We further mention Rehoboth, 1732; Rehoboth the Second, 1753; Cheshire, 1771; Lanesborough, 1772; Rehoboth the Third, 1789; and Springfield, 1796.

In Connecticut: New London, 1725; Groton, 1705; and Thompson, 1750.

In New York: New York City, 1724; Ostego, 1792; Amsterdam, 1807; Deuryter, 1811; Willet, 1823; and Brookfield, 1810.

Knight says, "At that time (1729) there were only four Calvinistic churches in New England—one in Boston, one in Swanson, one in Newport, and one in Westerly."

These churches were associated together in the old Rhode Island Yearly Meeting. In 1729 there were twelve churches and eighteen ordained ministers. In 1769 there were some twenty churches, and among them was the old church at Providence, Rhode Island. The yearly meeting was changed to an association; this change was made after the Revolutionary War. This association, by 1813, had made the laying on of hands a test of fellowship, and the membership decreased to thirteen churches and twelve ministers, but it was still Arminian in doctrine.

Groton Union Conference

"When the Old Rhode Island Association became close in communion in the matter of laying on of hands, a number of churches met together in 1785 and formed the Groton Union Conference, and by 1795 numbered thirteen churches and extended over parts of three states. After so long a time, this old body became close in fellowship on the same point, and a number of the churches withdrew; several families belonging to it moved into western New York."⁷

Free Communion Baptists

About 1780, Benjah Corpe, a member of the General Baptist Church at Westerly, Rhode Island, moved to Stephentown, New York, and began preaching; several persons were converted and desired to be formed into a church, accordingly. Elder Simeon Crandall, pastor of the General Baptist Church at Stonington, Connecticut, and a member of Elder Babcock's Church in Westerly, Rhode Island, having been sent from their churches for that purpose, formed a church on the thirteenth day of September, 1783. This church, with others associated with it, was afterward

⁷ Backus History, pp. 414, 415.

called Free Communion Baptists, because it practiced open communion. This movement absorbed those churches that withdrew from the Groton Conference on account of its going into close fellowship on the point of the laying on of hands. Also those families which moved into New York state for the same reason, they were all Arminian in doctrine, including the Groton Union Conference.

Corpe, at the time he did the preaching mentioned above, was not ordained; but on October 15, 1785, he was ordained by this same Simeon Crandall and Elder Davis from the Stonington Church.

Elder Corpe continued preaching after his ordination and the church continued to grow, and other ministers were ordained. Among them we mention Nicholas Northrup, 1793; George Elliot, 1794; Cary Rogers and John Howard, 1795; Thomas Tolman, 1796 and John Wilson, 1797. (The above information was taken from Montgomery's *History* and Williams' *Memorials of Free Communion Baptists*.)

In 1796 there were nine churches with a membership of 500. In 1802, 1808 and 1812, the Lord blessed them with considerable revivals, considerable increase in membership and a number of active ministers.

They began to hold yearly meetings in 1802, and in 1835 they formed a General Conference. In the meantime, churches were formed in Pennsylvania and Canada; the Lord blessed them with a tide of prosperity and they increased in membership and influence. The attention of the Randall movement was directed toward them and corresponding messengers were sent to their meetings from that body.

In 1840, an interest in education began to manifest itself among them; and in 1844, Whitsown Seminary was established. They also began to take an interest in foreign missions, and they assisted the Randall movement in sending their first missionary to India.

In 1841, they joined the General Conference of Free Will Baptists in the Randall movement while in session at Topsham, Massachusetts. "Since that time," says Mr. Williams, "these Free or Free Communion Baptists have remained a contented part of that denomination, and nearly all traces of their separate origin and denominational life have long since disappeared. These people engage in supporting all the general enterprises of that people, and at the same time cultivate their own distinctive field where once they planted churches."

Arminian Baptists in the Middle States

To show the widespread nature of the Arminian Baptist principles in the early part of the history of the United States, we will give a brief account of them in the Middle Atlantic States.

New York—A report made to the classes of Amsterdam in 1657 by two reformed clergymen, says, "At Gravesend are reported Mennonites; yea, they for the most part, reject infant baptism, the Sabbath, the office of preachers and teachers of God's Word, saying that through these have come all sorts of contention in the world." And again, "Last year a fomenter of evil came there. He was a cobbler from Rhode Island, in New England, and stated that he was commissioned by Christ. He began to preach at Flushing and then went with the people into the river and dipped them." Vedder says in his history that this was Elder William Wickenden, and that he was fined 100 pounds of Flemish for preaching the Bible, and ordered banished from the province as soon as the fine was paid. Finding that he was poor, they lessened the fine, but not the banishment.

New York was captured from the Dutch by the English in 1664, and after this Mr. Wickenden made frequent visits to that city and preached. He died in 1669. He was an Arminian Baptist minister.

In 1712, Valentine Wightman, pastor of the General Baptist Church at Groton, Connecticut, was invited by Nicholas Eyres and

others to come and preach to them; he did so occasionally for two years.

Services were held in the house of Mr. Eyres; he and others were converted and were baptized. The women, five of them, were baptized at night for fear of mob violence, but the seven men were baptized in the daylight under the protection of Governor Hunt.

In 1715, the house of Mr. Eyres was registered as a meeting house. Mr. Eyres is represented as a Baptist teacher in the petition presented to the governor for registration. Mr. Eyres was formally ordained and the church fully set in order in 1724; Mr. Eyres was pastor till 1731. During this time the church prospered greatly, and a house was built on Golden Hill which was the first Baptist church house in New York City. Mr. Vedder says, "The contemporary testimony is unanimous that this church was Arminian in theology. . . . William Wickenden, to whose labor the church was primarily due, was the most active Elder of the six Principle Arminian wing of the first church in Providence. Rev. Valentine Wightman was the most eminent Arminian Baptist preacher of his generation."⁸ Eyres went to the Second Church in Newport, which was also Arminian, in 1731, and became associate pastor to Mr. Wightman.

Vedder further says that the second Baptist church in New York was established on Oyster Bay, Long Island, by Baptist refugees from Massachusetts and Baptist colonists from Rhode Island, under the leadership of William Rhodes. Robert Feeks was ordained in 1724, and since that time the church has had an unbroken history. This was an Arminian church.

Jeremiah Dodge, from the old church at Fishkill, and several other brethren, also Arminian Baptists, joined with brethren at Scotch Plains, New Jersey, and formed a church. They first worshiped in a private house, then in a large loft, and finally built a house for their growing congregation to worship in. By 1762, there had been gathered into the flock a few Calvinistic

⁸ Vedder, *op. cit.* p. 25.

brethren and they lettered off and formed another congregation, choosing John Gano as pastor.

Several Separate Baptist churches were formed in Dutchess, Rensselaer and Saratoga Counties during the last half of the eighteenth century. Several Baptist churches were formed of the converts of the Wesley and Whitefield revivals, who did not believe in the baptism of infants, nor in sprinkling and pouring for baptism. They differed from the New Lights in that they believed in organizations. In their membership were both Calvinists and Arminians.

The New Piscataqua Church of New Jersey began its existence in New Hampshire in or about 1689. Hansard Knollys, a noted General Baptist who spent considerable time in this country also, served as one of its early pastors. On account of persecution they moved to Long Island, "Which," says Vedder, "was like jumping out of a frying pan into the fire." From there they moved to New Jersey. After moving to New Jersey they called their church and settlement New Piscataqua. This was an Arminian church.

Members from a Baptist Church in Tipperary, Ireland, settled at Cohansey. They were joined by Baptists from England, and by other Baptists from New Hampshire. They were formed into a church by Elder Thomas Killingsworth, from England, an Arminian Baptist preacher, in 1690 or 1691. He had been ordained by the General Baptists and was very influential in that territory. Timothy Brooks, another Arminian Baptist preacher, belonged to this church.

According to Vedder there were 24 churches, 16 ministers and 2,994 members in New Jersey in 1792. He says of them further, "It is not possible to determine, with any approach to exactness, whether Arminians or Calvinists predominated in these early churches."⁹ The churches of which we have been writing were Arminian, and most of the others were also in their beginning.

⁹ Vedder, *idem.*, p. 53.

Pennsylvania—This state became the stronghold of the Calvinistic Baptists in the nineteenth century, but up to the close of the eighteenth century it was largely Arminian. The old Philadelphia Association did not become a Calvinistic body until around 1742.

Speaking of Baptists in Pennsylvania, Vedder says there were 42 churches, 35 ministers and 2,920 members in 1770. Of this number he says that only ten churches, and 667 members and 11 ministers were regular Baptists. He says further that "Up to 1742, the Arminian Baptists had decidedly the advantage in numbers and enterprise and seemed likely to become the dominating party."

Following the Revolutionary War, a concentrated effort was made to unite all stripes of Baptists in one organization. In that union it was provided that the belief and preaching that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man should not be a bar or test of fellowship. In most associations "Articles of Faith" were adopted which did not conflict with this provision. Coming as it did right when the several colonies were being united into one federal government, the effort was put over nicely. Most Baptists went into the union by the year 1801. The Missionary Baptist denomination was a result of the outcome of this union.

The Period of the First Merger of Baptists in the United States, 1750-1801

The period indicated by the above figures was a remarkable period in a number of respects. During this period people of the United States were blessed with several remarkable revivals. Some of them could be classed as awakenings. During that period the same people went through a very hard struggle for their independence in government and liberty to worship God in the way they understood His Word to teach.

At the beginning of that period the religious attitude was pretty cold and formal; considerable activity, but not much real spiritual life was manifested, neither in this country nor England,

the mother country. The religious life of many was being made miserable through persecution on account of their religion.

The great evangelist, George Whitefield, made his first visit to this country about the year 1740, and several trips by the time of his death in 1770. The common people of this country heard him gladly, thought some of the high church folks closed the doors against him. Vast congregations of interested people listened to him; they were filled with religious enthusiasm and spiritual life each time he came, and it is said he made seven trips across the ocean to this country to deliver his revival messages to the people. A great awakening came to America and the greater part of the old icy religion that once was here melted away to give place to a greater religion in our world.

Many people who were saved refused to join their efforts with the religious denominations that were here. They were called New Lights. Before too long Shubael Stearns, who was a New Light, became converted to the Baptist position on several points in the Scriptures, and being a fluent speaker and diligent worker, he formed many New Lights into churches known as Separate Baptist churches. They were at one time more numerous than any other class of Baptists, and they were about fifty-fifty on the point of Calvinism.

At the close of the Revolutionary War a move was set on foot to unite the Regular and Separate Baptists; and the long struggle for liberty, together with the strong effort put forth to unite the colonies into one government at the close of the struggle, made it a pretty easy matter to effect the union. Mr. Riley says on that point, "The struggles and sufferings which all had undergone in common, served to weld them the more easily after the gigantic contest had closed. This was illustrated by the easy fusion of the Separate and Regular Baptists of Virginia in 1787. . . . This was the signal for union throughout the provinces, so that within a few years after the fusion in Virginia, the denomination presented a united front."¹⁰ In this fusion they laid aside the old Philadel-

¹⁰ Riley, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 111.

phia Confession of Faith, the Confession adopted by the Calvinists in this country in 1707 which caused the trouble in New England between the Randall movement and the Calvinistic Baptists.

Rev. Throgmorton, a Landmark Baptist, in his debate with Rev. Potter, a Hardshell Baptist, has this to say on this point: "Then he tells you that the Kehukee Association is now on the very platform it was organized on in the beginning—has the same confession of faith. That is a mistake. It was organized on the Philadelphia Confession, before any union of Regulars and Separates, but at the union of the two bodies it adopted a new Confession of Faith which you can read in Burkitt's History. The same is true of unions in other states at this time."¹¹ By 1801 a merger or union was effected with the General Baptists on the same basis or confession.

Up to this union the General Baptists were more numerous than the Regulars, but this union advanced the cause of Calvinistic Baptists in name and numbers considerably; but at heart, or in principle, there were as many Arminian Baptists as there ever were. This union resulted finally in two classes of Baptists—The United Baptists and the Missionary Baptists. We finally had more different kinds of Baptists than before the union.

¹¹ Burkitt and Read, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-54.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RANDALL MOVEMENT

This was a religious movement set in motion by the Spirit of God and the Word of truth, through the instrumentality of a number of very sincere ministers, Benjamin Randall being the principle leader among them. We call it the Randall Movement because he seemed to be a leader chosen by God to set the movement in order.

By this we do not mean to say that Benjamin Randall was the founder of this movement; we do not think that; we think God was leading in this matter. We might say further that we do not think Randall was the founder of the Free Will Baptist denomination.

We have noticed statements from men of some reputation among us to the effect that Randall founded the Free Will Baptist denomination. This is a very careless statement, and very much in error. There were Free Will Baptist congregations in this country before Randall was born, even associations.

Randall's Conversion

In 1770 George Whitefield was closing his career as an evangelist. At New Castle, New Hampshire, a young man of the age of 22 years heard him preach. Two days after this, the great evangelist passed into another world. When this young man heard of the death of Whitefield, being struck with the thought of the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death, no doubt he was caused to meditate seriously on the discourse of the evangelist; he meditated also on the course of his own life. Meditation brought conviction, and conviction resulted in conversion. In this way the spiritual life of Benjamin Randall began.

Church Membership

He first became a member of a Congregational church. Laxity

in discipline caused him to leave the Congregationalists, and he then became a member of the Baptist church at Berwick, in 1775 or 1776. Soon he was licensed and began to preach.

His Ministry Preaching

Like the apostle, Paul, of Bible time, he *consulted not with flesh and blood* as what to preach, but studied God's revealed Word and preached what he understood it to teach.

He preached that Christ tasted death for every man, making it possible, therefore, for all to be saved should they accept Him and His teaching. He preached that while salvation was the gift of God, God, being the Donor, had a right to arrange His own manner of disposing of that gift; that this gift was offered to all who would repent of their sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He taught that man's will was free to accept Christ and live, or reject Him and die; that this liberty was given to all.

His Preaching Unsatisfactory

This, though he did not know it at first, was exactly contradictory to what his Baptist brethren taught. They held to Calvinism in its strongest form; i. e., that God had from all eternity ordained that a certain portion of the human family should go to heaven, and that the remaining portion should go to hell; and that the number in each class was so definitely fixed that it could not be increased or diminished; that any of those on either side could not change their destiny by any act of theirs, either good or bad; that those who were ordained to hell could not repent: they were ordained to hell before they were ever born.

His Trial by the Baptists

Randall's Baptist brethren tried first to convince him that he was in error; but failing to convince him, a council of ministers was called at Upper Gilmanton to consider his case. This debate

—trial—lasted for two days, and on the last day the leading ministers of the council made public declaration of non-fellowship with Randall and his principles. To this he replied that it made no difference to him so long as he knew that the Lord owned him.

Thus, without seeking it, Randall was driven to stand by himself, or to accept and preach doctrines that he did not believe the Bible to teach. The record says, "With his characteristic firmness he stood alone. Others who heard the discussion also took sides."

The introduction to the Minutes of the General Conference says: "Benjamin Randall of New Castle, New Hampshire, left the Baptist denomination in 1780, because he could not peacefully preach the doctrines of a general atonement and the freedom of the will. The same year he gathered a small church in New Durham, which was called the Church of Christ. This was the germ of the Free Will Baptist Denomination."

His New Home

The Free Baptist Cyclopcdia, on Pages 558 and 559, says: "Early in 1777 several persons from New Durham, New Hampshire, heard Randall preach at Madbury and gave him a pressing invitation to go to their town and preach to them. He went soon after, and the following autumn went a second time. On a second invitation to settle with them, he replied that if the matter proceeded from the Lord he would go. Finally in March, 1778, he moved to New Durham, then a town of 300 inhabitants who dwelt in humble homes in the openings that had been made in the forest. But he would hear nothing to their proposals for formal settlement as pastor, *for he never intended to be confined to any people, but meant to be every person's minister.* For three years the people had been destitute of ministerial labor. Randall purchased about 30 acres of land on the ridge, where he lived and died. He raised corn to pay for the land, and after ten or twelve years, it was free from debt. In the midst of his most active labors in this wilderness

he was called to order by his brethren for not preaching the doctrines of John Calvin. He had considered but little these doctrines, as they had not been in dispute in the community.”¹

Others Take Sides with Randall in New Hampshire

Early in 1779 churches which had been formed in Loudon and Canterbury protested against Calvinistic election. The same year a church was organized in Barrington, mostly composed of brethren of liberal sentiments, standing as a branch of the Berwick church not having been heeded, in March, 1780, he united with the church in Barrington, and April 5 he was ordained as an evangelist by Tosier Lord and Edward Lock. On Saturday, June 30, 1780, a meeting was appointed for the organization of the church at New Durham. Articles of faith and a covenant drawn up by Mr. Randall were adopted, and seven persons were constituted a church. The next meeting was held September 2, when four others joined the little band and Mr. Randall was chosen clerk. With great care the records were kept by him for nearly thirty years. Robert Boody was chosen deacon. November 5 two more were received; May 17, 1781, fourteen united. At the close of the first year the church numbered seven men and thirteen women.

Great opposition met Randall at every side on account of the free atonement he preached; and being unable to answer his opponents by argument, he was in great distress. In July, 1780, he walked away from his dwelling a number of rods and sat down on a rock in the midst of the growing corn. Here he prayed, and the divine presence so overshadowed him that he carried the remarkable experience to the day of his death. He was shown that he must give up all for Christ. He must yield completely the doctrines of men and be taught of God; and as he yielded, at once he felt the flaming power of God in his soul. The Scriptures were opened to his understanding. He saw that all was harmony in the universal love of God to men and a general atonement. All

¹ The Free Baptist Cyclopedia, pp. 558, 559.

trials on these subjects were swept away forever. Henceforth he became a tireless flame of fire in all the churches which God led him to plant. He was fire itself until he himself was consumed.

In the history of the denomination in New Hampshire and Maine, and in the article on Free Will Baptists, we consider the tireless exertion of Benjamin Randall, first, in gathering from communities destitute of the gospel privileges a denomination, and then organizing and instructing them. He was everywhere the acknowledged father of the people who by some were called by his name. They yielded to his good judgment and, above all, to the loving sweetness of his Christian life. In 1780 he preached at Hollis, Maine, where soon a church of 100 members was gathered.

Other Churches in Maine

New Durham Church may be regarded as the cradle of the movement. The doctrine as taught by them took root in Tamworth, a sparsely settled township on the northern frontier. Early in 1781 a request was received at New Durham that the brethren might be embodied as a church. Accordingly, Randall and Boody, assisted by Elder Samuel Weeks of Gilmanton, who by the providence of God was traveling that way, organized, February 26, a church of eight members at Tamworth. Early in the summer of 1781 a church of seventy members was organized at the present site of North Strafford as a result of an extensive revival under Randall and Lock. Joseph Boody, afterwards its pastor for thirty years, was one of the converts and original members.

In 1781, before he organized the last-mentioned churches, Mr. Randall made his first preaching tour in Maine, visiting several towns on the Saco River. At Little Falls Plantation (now Hollis) many believed, were baptizd, and a church was organized. In November a messenger was sent to New Durham requesting Mr. Randall to spend a portion of his time at Hollis. This request was generously consented to by the church there. This church numbered 100 members, about one sixth of the whole population.

In 1781 the spiritual destitution in the new settlements of Maine greatly impressed Randall. Breasting the strong prejudice which existed in these settlements against traveling preachers, ignoring the enactment of the general court which made it penal for anyone to preach or prophesy without being first approved by four neighboring churches, on September 30, he entered the state again, crossed the Kennebec River and held his first meeting on Parker's Island (now Georgetown), where many were converted. On October 2 he made his first visit to Woolwich where he baptized five. Only three out of the 300 present had even seen baptism administered by immersion. The whole town was aroused. Strong men, leaving their dissipation, were converted to Christ.

When Randall's right to preach in the meetinghouse at Stinson's Mills, in Woodwich, was questioned, he made a pulpit of a grave in the yard outside, and preached from the text, *The Most High dwelleth in temples not made with hands*. To some it was a time of refreshing. The next Sabbath he organized a church in the town, another one at Georgetown, another of twenty members on Squam Island (now Westport), yet another at Bristol, and the foundation of the Edgcomb Quarterly Meeting was thus laid. After a brief stay in New Durham, by request he visited Gorham and Scarborough. At Fort Hill in Gorham a church was organized, and probably at this time a church was also planted at Dunston in Searborough.

During this year the church at Little River in Lisbon was formed, and one on the other side of the Androscoggin in Durham. By the close of 1781 at least ten of the fourteen churches in the denomination were in Maine. Each church had its stated monthly meeting.

In 1782, Shakerism (Quakerism) struck the churches; Loudon and Canterbury were swept away with it, and through Lock's influence the church at Crown Point became an entire wreck. North Strafford church was saved only by the earnest efforts of Randall and his coadjutors. The church at Hollis, Maine, had its test through Shakerism, and was visited by Randall. While he

was in that region the Gray and New Gloucester churches were organied July 1. Daniel Hubbard and Nathan Merrill were members. Both of these men became active ministers of the movement.

A Period of Gloom in New Hampshire

A period of gloomy days seemed to have come over the movement in New Hampshire; revivals were not enjoyed in that state as in Maine at this time. It seems that Shakerism (Quakerism) almost paralyzed the work in that region for some time. Even the New Durham church was considerably shaken. We find in a statement in the Free Baptist Cyclopedia that one of their deacons, one of their ruling elders and another prominent member, were dismissed from the fellowship of the church because they did not believe that baptism, the Lord's Supper, nor the Washing of Saints' Feet was obligatory upon Christians.

But in spite of this and other difficulties which came in the way of the progress of that church, they struggled on and through to victory. At the quarterly meeting at New Gloucester on October 13, 1784, a day of fasting and prayer was observed in which they petitioned the God they served to cut short the delusion of Shakerism and give peace to the churches. It is stated that afterwards *the churches enjoyed quiet and prosperity.*

Nine of the members of the Old Crown Point Church at Strafford, which had become lifeless because of Shakerism, rallied and wrote a letter seeking fellowship with the movement. Randall and other helpers went to their relief, and the cause at that place was given new life; it is stated that a second church was formed in that town. Cries for help came, too, from Loudon and Canterbury where the work was wrecked by the same movement; they were given help and restored.

Shakerism didn't succeed in Maine as it did in New Hampshire, although its *hotbed* was located in that state, and it had Edward Lock there to boost it all he could. It has been said that Rev. John Whitney should be given credit, so far as human effort

is due credit, for its failure in that state. It was said that it seemed the Lord sent him into that territory to counteract the effort of the enemy. Through his instrumentality old churches were built up and new ones formed to take the place of the old. But most of the old came back.

John Whitney

The above-named man seems to have been a minister called by the Lord on purpose; the purpose, or one main purpose, was referred to in the last paragraph. Whitney is said to have been the first minister ordained by this movement. He went from his home in Goldsboro, Maine, to New Durham, New Hampshire—150 miles to report his call to the quarterly meeting; his ordination took place at Westport at the next quarterly meeting on September 7. The Free Baptist Cyclopedia says, "For thirty years he was successful in awakening sinners in his evangelistic work."

He was sent on several special missions by leading ministers of the movement and by quarterly meetings. In 1787 a remarkable revival was held by him at Royalsborough. In 1813 he moved to Newfield, and through faithful labors the place of death soon bloomed as a garden. Many souls were saved through his instrumentality, and a goodly number of churches formed.

The First Decade

The Free Baptist Cyclopedia says of the first decade, "During the first ten years of our denominational growth more than twenty churches were planted through the zeal of our ministers." And they give the names of eleven ordained ministers besides the licentiates. These churches so far were all located in Maine and New Hampshire.

As has been indicated, the first decade closed with the churches in New Hampshire in gloom and declension. The first flush of life had spent itself, and a deathlike quiet seemed to settle on the Free churches of New Hampshire. Then did Randall greatly arouse

himself; searching consecration and prayer occupied the soul of the leader of the new movement. The New Durham Church was reorganized April 13, 1791, and the membership reduced to 21; the members signed a new and especially strict covenant.

The few delegates attending the March session of the quarterly meeting at Parsonfield brought disheartening reports from the field; and at the session held three months later, Randall was prostrated by sickness; a contentious people were wont to attend the Gorham session of the quarterly meeting, and for several years this was called the seat of war. Publicly they interrupted and contradicted the speakers on Sundays. Most things, it seemed, were going wrong.

Brighter Days

In 1791 brighter days came. Soon after the reformation referred to in New Durham, a revival broke out and fifty were inquiring the way of life in tears; and the quarterly meeting which met there in June was one of remarkable power. In three months sixty-seven had been added to the church there; John Buzzell, led to Christ through Randall's influence, carried the gospel to his native town of Middleton on the eastern border of New Durham; and soon a church of nearly fifty members was established as a branch of the New Durham Church. Aaron Buzzell, John's brother, was the first convert in this new congregation.

The revival spread into Brookfield, Wolfsborough, Barnstead and Pittsfield; the many converts were formed into churches. Whitney reported from Kittery to the June quarterly meeting that a church had been formed there.

The sweeping revivals just now experienced in New Hampshire were felt along the border of Maine; Waterborough was blessed with one; a church was organized at Ossipee Hill, and Rev. P. Tingley moved to that place; Raymond and Bristol also enjoyed revivals.

At the beginning of 1792 the New Durham congregation

numbered 126 members. A general meeting of delegates from several branches met at the home of James Lock in Barnstead, May 23, 1792, and formed the New Durham Local Quarterly Meeting; the old quarterly meeting, formed in 1783, became the regular yearly meeting of the denomination. Proper quarterly meetings were formed throughout the denomination, and messengers or delegates from these quarterly meetings constituted the yearly meeting.

The yearly meeting met at Westport, Maine, and Edward Lock returned to the fellowship of the denomination; he moved to Chesterville and organized a church at Farmington in 1793. Francis Tufts and John Woods, prominent men of Farmington, were ordained ruling elders. These three men became founders of the churches in the Sandy River Valley. By request Randall, Tingley, Hibbard, Whitney and Deacon Otis visited the Farmington Church and received it into the yearly meeting.

The year 1793 was a great year for the New Durham Church. A new branch was added in the congregation at Gilmanton Iron Works; the New Durham Church itself received 31 members at one time and 26 at another.

At the yearly meeting in February, 1797, the twenty-third of that month was set apart as a day of fasting; a new season of revivals is said to have begun on that day and *for years the most wonderful displays of divine power followed their labors.*

At the yearly meeting at New Durham in 1798, 2,000 people were present, and nearly 100 were hopefully converted. Two hundred new converts were reported two months later at the quarterly meeting.

Randall and His Ministerial Help

Tosier Lord, Edward Lock, John Shepherd, Pelatiah Tingley, Samuel Weeks and Daniel Hibbard were Randall's allies during the early part of the movement which he had espoused. These men joined him in standing for a plan of salvation which gave to every man a chance to reach heaven and enjoy a life of eternal bliss. These

men stood together bravely for an unrestricted atonement and for the freedom of the human will; they were all intelligent and energetic workers; Tingley was well educated.

Lord never formally joined the denomination, but he was very much in sympathy with it. When the Calvinists withdrew from Edward Lock, Mr. Lord said: "If you withdraw fellowship from Mr. Lock, you do also from me; for I am of the same belief."

Lock was not a very steady man for a time; he became entangled in Quakerism for awhile; but once settled down, he did good work for the young cause. Assisted by Francis Tufts and John T. Woods, he established churches and formed the Farmington Quarterly Meeting in the Sandy River Valley; it grew to the point that it numbered sixty churches.

Tingley was Randall's right-hand man; he was with him in most of his work and, being thoroughly educated, assisted him greatly in the organization and development of the movement.

Their Simple But Earnest Message

In distinction from high Calvinism, close communion, and a cold formal religion, Randall and his coadjutors went throughout New England and some of the Middle Atlantic States preaching the doctrines of a free salvation, the free agency of man, a living faith, an active piety and open communion. Many received the message with gladness; by 1783, thirteen branches (congregations) were formed, all worshipping at different places, and yet all of them considering themselves members of the New Durham Church.

Oddities in the Early Days

As the quarterly meeting was the principal meeting and the highest authority at that time in the denomination, the following action taken by that body will present the views of the fathers on many questions of practical interest.

In the early days of the denomination when the number of ministers was small, and they were absent much of the time on missionary tours, it became necessary to have someone in the church to look after its interests and lead the meetings. Ruling elders were ordained for this work, not only for expediency, but because the Scriptures were believed to recognize two classes of elders—one to teach and another to rule. Said Elder Martin, in speaking of ruling elders, "Their duty is to see that meetings are regularly kept up, the ordinances and discipline attended to, and the house kept in order."

In view of their administering the ordinances, it is recorded as *the opinion of the quarterly meeting in 1785, that the Scriptures are not positive on the question, but that such ruling elders should be very cautious in seeing that such members as they may baptize be soon added to same branch (or church) under their watch and care; and that the administration of the ordinances should be by a ruling elder only.*

Never were efforts more untiring than those of the early Free Will Baptists to reclaim their erring brethren. An offending member was first visited by the aggrieved brother, then by one or two with him; if no satisfaction could be obtained, the church was called together and an effort made through a committee. Next the quarterly meeting was requested to assist, and some of the most skillful members of the quarterly meeting were sent to the church to assist; if that failed, the erring member was laid under a written admonition, borne to him by some good and faithful brother, and this was repeated. It was not till after all this effort to restore the fallen member that he was rejected by the quarterly meeting. In 1785, it was voted *that a transgressing member, after the first and second admonition, be voted in a public meeting as rejected.*

For a few years after the organization of the quarterly meeting, it was not uncommon for persons to be baptized and received into communion with that body. In 1786, it was agreed that if any should unite with the quarterly meeting, *they should join with the particular monthly meeting (church) where they reside.* The

next year it appears that some had refused to unite with the monthly meeting or church, where they resided, and it was voted, *that those who are not in fellowship with the church, are not (in fellowship) with the quarterly meeting.*

And while we are on the oddities of this movement in the early part of its history, we will quote further from the Introduction to the Minutes of the General Conference:

"In 1786, after much conference as to whether the Scriptures anywhere say that baptism shall be before admission into the church, the quarterly meeting concludes that the Scriptures nowhere say it is a door of admission."

The subject of bearing arms and learning war was under consideration in 1790 when it was concluded unanimously, *that it is not consistent for the soldiers of Christ to use carnal weapons.* It was also voted, to *petition the authority* for release from military duty.

The washing of saints' feet was at first generally considered as a Scriptural requirement, and consequently was practiced to a considerable extent. After a careful investigation of the subject, however, it was no longer regarded as a Christian ordinance.

For many years the churches had no settled pastors, but sustained meetings among themselves, or were supplied by the ministers who generally, as evangelists, passed through and received no compensation but the voluntary contributions of the people.

Associated Life

The line of demarkation in the state between Calvinistic and Arminian Baptists was at this time very faintly drawn. There were no associations among the Arminian Baptists in New Hampshire or Maine till late in 1783, and none among the Calvinists until two years later. Up to this time Randall and his associates had had honorable mention in the *Annals of Mr. Benedict* as Baptist ministers, and their churches were classed as Baptist churches.

The first Free Baptist convention among these folk was held

at Hollis, Maine, in October, 1783; at this convention they submitted to the churches a plan to hold quarterly meetings. They convened again on December 6 at Hollis, and after spending Sunday in spiritual communion and rejoicing on Monday, October 8, a definite vote was taken and quarterly meetings were appointed at New Gloucester the first Saturday in March, at New Durham, New Hampshire, the first Saturday in June, in Woolwich the first Saturday in September, and at Hollis, Maine, the first Saturday in December.

The quarterly meetings were to be composed of ministers, deacons, church clerks and such messengers as might be appointed by the several churches. All churches were to be represented in each quarterly meeting. The object of these meetings was to consult upon matters of general interest in the cause of Christ, examine and ordain ministers, adjust difficulties, enquire into the fellowship of the ministry and the churches, engage in worship and celebrate the ordinances.

Their First Publication

The arrangement for the quarterly meetings seemed to put new pep into the churches in Maine, and they now entered upon a new era of progress. At the quarterly meeting at what is now Westport, September 4, 1784, a move was taken which resulted in printing the *Two Mites*, a work of 250 pages, edited by Henry Allen, a New Light preacher from Nova Scotia; and thus almost the only Arminian literature—except the Bible—accessible to them entered the homes of our people.

Policy

The New Durham Church may be regarded as the cradle of the new movement; it was there that its welfare was considered, its ailments discussed, the remedy selected, and applied in the way most effective. It was there that the young interests were nursed and cared for to a period and state where they in God's hand, could help others to reach a period where they could help still others.

These ministers and members in the beginning had no idea of establishing a separate church body or denomination. They were just simply preaching and practicing what they understood the Bible to teach. They were known among themselves as churches of Christ or God; others called them by several names: The New Durham Connection; General Provisioners; Free Willers.

The New Hampshire Legislature passed a resolution in 1804 as follows: "Resolved that the people of this state, commonly known by the name of Freewill Antipedo Baptist Church and Society, shall be considered as a district sect or denomination, with all the privileges as such, agreeable to the constitution." This legal recognition of the name in that way by the legislature fixed the name to them in a legal way, and they gradually began to assume the name, Freewill Baptists, as a name that they were commonly known by.

In this connection the Free Baptist Cyclopedia says: "Many of the fathers lived and died objecting to this appellation, but the legal recognition of the denomination by the New Hampshire legislature in 1804 fixed the title of Freewill Baptists for the connection."²

In 1792, the number of churches had increased so much and their territory extended to such a point that Mr. Randall saw the need of a more complete organization; therefore the yearly meeting was established. Each church was to represent in the quarterly meeting and the quarterly meetings were to represent in the yearly meeting; it finally took form as it is today with our yearly meetings and associations.

The Second Decade (1790-1800)

As has been seen, the second decade had been a prosperous one for the new movement. The great Master had blessed it wondrously with revival after revival; new churches and quarterly meetings had been formed; Many of the churches and ministers who

² The Free Baptist Cyclopedia, op. cit.

left the denomination returned to the fold and were busying themselves for the Master.

The Free Baptist Cyclopedia says: "The last ten years (1790 to 1800) have witnessed the full organization of the denomination and its establishment on a firm foundation for progress and growth."³ It had spread pretty well over New Hampshire and Maine, and was reaching out into Vermont, New York and even into Ohio.

The first church in Vermont belonging to this movement was formed at Strafford by John Buzzell early in 1793; the church had nine members and was a scion from New Durham Church.

Third Decade (1800-1810)

We have given considerable detail in relating this history up to now; from this time forward we must use more brevity.

New Hampshire: A church of 64 members was formed at New Hampton, New Hampshire, January 6, 1800; Winthrop Young was the minister. The quarterly meeting met there May 21, and a revival broke out; ninety converts were baptized.

The independent church at Gilford which was under the care of Richard Martin was admitted to the quarterly meeting; it had 141 members. It soon had branches in five other towns, aggregating a membership of 250.

The yearly meeting at New Durham, July 14, 1800, was attended by 2,000 persons, a splendid attendance for those times.

To the quarterly meeting on May 20, 1801, held in New Hampshire, there came 100 persons mounted on horseback, all riding in a body. They rode up to the church house singing hymns of praise to God and were met by 400 already assembled at church. The next morning such praise and manifestation of divine glory is said to have filled the sanctuary that they were unable to enter upon business for two hours. During the year 1801, there were seven churches and 635 members added to the quarterly meeting.

³ The Free Baptist Cyclopedia, *idem*.

In 1803, three churches reported additions at each quarterly meeting; 333 members were reported in all. The same year a remarkable revival was enjoyed at Madison; it continued for some time; and by August, meetings were being held night and day.

In 1804, Randall was unable to attend the quarterly meeting in August, on account of a severe cough. He failed to be at the yearly meeting too for the same reason; he was never free any more till his death. Six ministers were ordained this year in New Hampshire, and five churches were added this year.

In 1805, conversions were reported in seven towns; 130 conversions were reported at Second Church at Gilmanton under the care of Richard Martin; four ministers were ordained and four churches were formed this year.

In 1806, so many gathered at the yearly meeting at New Durham in June that sermons were preached to those on the outside who could not get inside. Revivals were reported in five towns that year; at Osippee the revival continued for five years.

In 1807, David Knowlton, a minister 27 years old, was called to quit the walks of men.

In 1808 Benjamin Randall was summoned to lay his armor by; he died at the age of 59 years. The fatal disease which had crippled his work for the past two or three years finally took him away. It was said that, even under this adversity, his last few months had been full of usefulness and activity. When he could no longer go and come alone, others would accompany him and give him such assistance as would enable him to be of some service. When his voice ceased to proclaim the message of truth as it once did, he used his pen writing words of peace, counsel and encouragement to the various meetings of the movement; free grace was his theme while living in health, and he kept preaching that theme through his affliction till death stopped him.

John Buzzell preached at his funeral services; seventeen ministers were present at his funeral, and the gathering of the people was like a yearly meeting.

Reports of revivals, formation of churches and the ordination of new ministers kept coming in from the field up to the close of that decade.

Maine: In November, 1805, the yearly meeting at Gorham was one of great interest. Elias Smith of the Christian Connection sought admission to the movement. He was a man of eloquence and power, and several churches would have come with him, but John Buzzell earnestly opposed his admission on the ground that he, Smith, taught the annihilation of the wicked at death. Smith, although not accepted, continued his association with our people for several years. He preached next day to the people in the open air a very stirring sermon, and more than 1000 people heard him. Randall preached on Monday with great power *holding till sundown, and the penitents were many, and many were saved that day.*

In August, 1808, at the Gorham and Parsonfield quarterly meeting in northern Saco, the record says of the meeting: "The glorious power of the Lord, which was working wonders of grace in the Edgecomb Quarterly Meeting was present with the people in the great grove reformation at Saco: two thousand sat down in the grove to listen to the gospel." It was said that 250 were saved before winter closed.

In 1809, seventy were saved at Raymond, and 150 at Gray and Gloucester, Ephraim Stinchfield's home town. He baptized seventy in York, Wells and Kittery.

In 1810, at South Parsonfield, a revival began; seventeen were saved one evening and 43 more that week.

A New Evangelist, Ephraim Stinchfield

Ephraim Stinchfield: He had a good father and mother; his mother took a great interest in his religious efforts, and he was said to be a good boy and youth. He began trying to preach several years before he really became a preacher. His first efforts were complete failures. Some of those who were acquainted with him

filed charges against him in the yearly meeting saying that he *wounded the cause of God by endeavoring to preach six or seven times, and could not*; but this didn't stop Stinchfield.

He applied for ordination and was required to preach a test sermon at the yearly meeting in 1798; he was immediately ordained. The Free Baptist Cyclopedia says that he immediately began an itinerant ministry of twelve years, paralleled only by the devoted labors of Benjamin Randall. Within eleven years he baptized over one thousand people. Almost perennial revivals attended his work.

A description of the scene of one of his baptismal services is given by the cyclopedia: "A beautiful cove on the seashore, surrounded by rising land, except where it opens into the ocean, was chosen as the place of baptism. A pulpit of driftwood was hastily constructed. A large company listened to Stinchfield's words from the text, 'Then they that received the word were baptized.' Before the sermon was ended, many fell under the power of God, crying for mercy. Among the number were several sight-seers who came over in a boat from Pemaquid in high glee to enjoy the novelty of the scene. The candidates related their experiences and forty-one were baptized. The next day, about sixty converts came to the table of the Lord's Supper. A few days later he baptized nineteen others."⁴

Vermont: In 1800, churches were formed in Hardwick, Sheffield, Cabot, Danville, West Danville and Walden; at Lynden and Sutton in 1801. In 1802, two quarterly meetings were formed: The Stafford Quarterly Meeting and the Hardwick (later Wheelock). John Broody Jr. seems to have had charge of this work.

Zachariah Leach: Zachariah Leach of Raymond was ordained at his home on November 6, 1794, by a council from the Gorham Quarterly Meeting, Mr. Randall being on the council. Leach became an efficient minister among the churches of this movement and was very useful in a number of ways.

John Colby: John Colby became a Christian in 1805 and was

⁴ The Free Baptist Cyclopedia, *idem*.

ordained to the ministry four years later. He was one of the most efficient evangelists of the Randall movement; he did quite a lot of itinerant work, going from one state to another.

The year 1811 was spent in New Hampshire where interesting revivals were witnessed, especially in Eaton and Merideth. In December of that year he witnessed a gracious outpouring of God's Spirit in Monteville, Maine. Here he baptized 88 and organized a church. He was taken away by the same disease that took Randall from the movement. The Free Baptist Cyclopedia says: "His record has come down to us as that of a man of God, a singular, gifted, faithful, persuasive, amiable and emotional preacher; in truth, a most beloved disciple of Christianity."⁵ He died November 23, 1817.

Fourth Decade (1810-1820)

In 1810 The New Durham Quarterly Meeting was divided into two quarterly meetings; there were 36 churches and 27 ministers before the division. Four new churches were added in 1810, and revivals were enjoyed in nearly all churches.

The Yearly Meeting was held in 1811 with the Sandwich Church; 2,500 were present at the meeting; good interest prevailed. Six hundred members were added to this section of the movement.

John Colby was preaching in that territory; great interest was being manifested and many souls were being saved. The New Durham Quarterly Meeting permitted another quarterly meeting to be set off in 1812.

Two thousand were present at the yearly meeting in 1813, and a great time was enjoyed.

The next five years were unfruitful on account of the war with Great Britain. Spotted fever also depleted entire neighborhoods, and often the fever took many of the best workers.

By 1818 blessings began to come again; revivals returned, new life was put into the churches, and souls were being saved again.

⁵ The Free Baptist Cyclopedia, *idem*.

The report from the churches in 1819 said that during the year past *nearly every church has felt the heavenly shower.*

Maine: The work was as prosperous in Maine during this decade as it was in New Hampshire. The attendance at the quarterly meeting at Limington was 2,000. Many conversions were reported and churches formed. The Lord had wondrously blessed in Maine.

Vermont: The movement in Vermont seemed to be enjoying about the same degree of prosperity. Nearly all churches reported revivals and an increase in membership; a few new churches were formed.

Ohio: At the beginning of this decade, the movement was carried into Ohio through the ministry of Eli Steadman who formed a church at Ruthland, Meigs County, in 1810. Other churches were soon gathered and, in 1814, the Athens Quarterly Meeting was formed, and a little later the Muskingham; a yearly meeting was probably formed also. But trouble came to the little band in 1818, and the work disappeared.

A Seven-Year Period (1820-1827)

The movement by this time has become pretty well founded, its system of doctrine and policy pretty well developed and settled by the bringing in of the General Conference.

New Hampshire: From the record, we gather that the same spirit of revivals prevailed in New Hampshire during this period as in the last decade. Several new churches were added to the movement and quite a number of members added to the old churches. Not many new ministers were added during this period, but several of the old ministers died and several moved to other territories; this situation created a scarcity of preachers. Only about fifteen remained in this territory, and they formed a plan to supply the destitute churches by rotation.

On May 12, 1826, Joanna Randall, wife of the distinguished leader of the movement, passed away at New Durham.

In 1825 the *Morning Star*, the leading periodical of the movement, was founded; it was moved to Dover seven years later where it served the movement many years.

Maine: At a funeral of one of the oldest settlers in Parsonfield which took place during a yearly meeting in 1820, the sermons preached by Buzzell, Place and Woodman were so serious and searching that a revival began at that place and 100 persons were converted; there were large additions also at Newfield and Waterborough.

Vermont: Splendid revivals were reported in this state also. Churches were established in Roxbury, Groton and Windsor. The yearly meeting at Turnbridge was one of unparalleled interest.

At the yearly meeting held in Strafford, interesting letters were read from New England, New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Encouraging information was received from the entire denomination.

After the defection in Ohio, reported in last decade, Elder Marks visited that state and the movement there was revived and put in motion again.

General Conference

At the yearly meeting in November, 1826, a committee was appointed to ferret out the question as to whether it was expedient for the movement to establish a general conference to consider matters pertaining to the movement as a whole.

The committee reported that in their opinion it was advisable, and indicated the general form of organization that the conference should take. The report of the committee was adopted unanimously.

Agreeably to the arrangement of this yearly meeting which represented well the movement in New England, delegates were chosen by the several bodies to meet at Turnbridge, Vermont, October 11, 1827, for a General Conference.

When the conference met and after preliminary work, Rev.

Enoch Place was elected as permanent moderator and Rev. Hosea Quinby was elected clerk of the conference for one year. This was an interesting meeting, and they adjourned to meet in October, 1828. The delegates and ministers attending this conference went away with increased interest and faith in the movement.

The Second General Conference

This meeting convened with the church at Sandwich, New Hampshire, October 9, 1828, and was made up of ministers and delegates from the following yearly meetings: Maine Eastern, Maine Western, New Hampshire, Vermont, Holland Purchase, Susquehanna, Ohio and the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting. Rev. John Buzzle and Nathaniel King presided over the meeting; Arthur Caverno recorded the proceedings.

Several items of business were passed by this meeting. Among others, they set up machinery to establish an itinerant ministry. A better attendance was realized at this session than at the preceding one. It is stated that a *glorious revival followed this conference in which the saints were comforted and many sinners converted to God.*

The Third General Conference

This meeting convened at Spafford, New York, in October, 1829, and Rev. Henry Hobbs presided over it. Every ordained preacher was given the right to take part in the deliberations of the conference. They declared also that all authority was vested in the church as a complete body, as pertaining to its government. That the establishment of an aristocratic form of government in the church strikes a deadly blow at the vitals of Christianity, as far as its influence extends.

Reports from all the yearly meetings indicated progress and prosperity, except in Vermont. It reported that many of the churches were in a low and disconsolate state.

The statistical table showed that there were 22 quarterly meetings, 311 churches, 201 ordained ministers, 62 licentiates, 12,860 members; 850 were added this year. This session of the conference closed with a revival.

The Fourth General Conference

This session met at Greenville, Rhode Island, October 14, 1830. Rev. Samuel B. Dyer served as moderator. Nearly all sections of the movement were represented. We give space for the following, as it shows the attitude of the movement on the communion question: "Agreed that the gospel communion is a communion of saints; that the invitation should be given to all saints of every denomination; and that the province of each church is, by the Scriptures, to judge of Christian character, agreeably to the ancient practice of our fathers in the gospel."

The following will also indicate the close feeling between this movement and the English General Baptists: "Agreed that William Hurley, a General Baptist preacher from England, now in this country, have the approbation of this conference to labor among us wherever his lot may be cast."

The report of the spiritual condition of the churches stated that "God had gloriously revived His work; great displays of His power had been made, and many added to the churches. In no one year has God so blessed this denomination as in the past year . . . It appears that 2,000 have been added to the churches." The statistics were: 30 quarterly meetings, 466 churches, 310 ministers, 101 licentiates, 21,499 members.

The Fifth General Conference

This session convened at Wilton, Maine, October 12, 1831, with Rev. Benjamin Thorn acting as moderator. Reports from Maine indicated prosperity; most of the churches had enjoyed revivals; Monteville Quarterly Meeting was excepted; a very difficult winter season was interfering with their progress. The Maine

Eastern Yearly Meeting had divided into two yearly meetings, the Penobscot and Kennebec.

The churches in New Hampshire were represented as being in a splendid condition; most of the churches had had *powerful revivals* and were in a good state of religion. This was also true in Holland Purchase and Ohio Yearly Meetings.

"Agreed, that the two Free Will Baptist conferences in North Carolina, and the association of General Baptists in Kentucky have the privilege of sending, each, one delegate to the next General Conference. The Free Will Baptists of North Carolina are reported to be in a prosperous condition. They number about 2,000 members."

At this conference the first steps toward the establishment of a book concern was taken which led to their printing establishment.

Statistics were: 35 quarterly meetings, 510 churches, 23,666 members.

The Sixth General Conference

This session was held at Meredith, New Hampshire, October 10, 1832, and Rev. Samuel B. Dyer presided. All the constituent bodies seemed to be represented. Although this past year was not so remarkable for general revivals, yet it was said that many places had been visited with the outpouring of God's Spirit and that the net increase had been about 2,000. Some churches were reported as suffering for want of ministers; that was especially true in Ohio. Great sympathy was expressed for them.

It was reported that an academy had already been founded at Parsonfield, Maine, and the conference resolved to patronize it. Other encouraging prospects were on the horizon for literary accomplishments.

The nucleus of a book concern was formed with Rev. Dave Marks as agent; the publishing committee and book agent were

instructed to buy the *Morning Star* establishment for the denomination. A foreign mission society was formed at this session.

The Seventh General Conference

This meeting was held at Strafford, Vermont, October 9, 1833, with Rev. Samuel Whitney presiding. This session was said to have been of unusual interest, better attendance and business transacted with greater unanimity than heretofore.

The Morning Star, which had been published at Limerock, Maine, was moved to Dover, New Hampshire. A treatise on doctrine and practice was adopted for the use of the membership.

Dr. Amos Sutton, whose home was in England and who was an English General Baptist missionary to India and was visiting and lecturing on foreign missions in this movement, was present at this conference and did much to awaken an interest in foreign missions.

A proposition was received from the Free Communion Baptists of New York on the subject of union with this movement; the union was thought to be feasible but was referred to the future.

Thus far, the General Conference had been meeting annually; but it was decided to meet biennially hereafter. The membership was given as 25,270 now; the increase this year was given as 2,883.

The Eighth General Conference

The eighth session of the General Conference met at Byron, New York, October 7, 1835. Rev. Samuel Whitney served as its moderator.

Rev. P. W. Lake was received as a corresponding messenger from the Black River Association of Free Communion Baptists.

Most of the different sections of the General Conference reported by letter or delegate.

New Hampshire, Parsonfield, Penobscot, Holland Purchase and Rhode Island Yearly Meetings were represented as being in

a prosperous condition. The last session of the New Hampshire was said to have been the most interesting ever held; Bro. Noyes (Eli) was ordained as missionary of India, and Bro. B. F. Nealy to the West. In Parsonfield Yearly Meeting, some churches were enjoying glorious revivals, while others were undergoing severe trials because of opposition to the benevolent enterprises. Rhode Island Yearly Meeting was said to be in a very prosperous state; prospects never more encouraging.

The Vermont and the Susquehanna Yearly Meetings were represented as being in a low state of religion. The others were represented as holding their own.

Correspondence with the General Baptists in England was noted, and "In our opinion, much good has resulted to the Christian world from Christian correspondence, and we are highly gratified with the correspondence with our brethren in England: we therefore recommend that it be continued. . . ."

The secretary was instructed to "annex the statistics of the Free Will Baptist Conference in North Carolina, and the Cookstown, Oakland and Ruthland Quarterly Meetings to the statistical table in these minutes."

We note that the conference recognized the Home Mission Society which was organized at Dover, New Hampshire, in August, 1834, as the Freewill Baptist Parent Home Mission Society of North America.

Quite an extended item was adopted relative to the Free Communion Baptists. It was stated that parties selected to do so had visited these people and had entered into a full discussion of the doctrine of the two bodies and that it was unanimously agreed that there was no difference between the two bodies except the name. It was resolved that the two should be one; it was further resolved that, in future intercourse between the churches and preachers, there should be no separate interest recognized.

The statistical table showed 55 quarterly meetings, 750 churches, 33,882 members; 5,408 added since the last report.

We give space to the following, believing it to be very important as showing the attitude of this movement toward the Holy Scriptures relative to church polity.

“Agreed that, in the opinion of this conference, the Holy Scriptures are the primary rule of faith and practice, for the Church of Christ; and being given by inspiration, are fully competent to thoroughly furnish the man of God unto every good word and work; consequently any other, as such, would be detrimental to the principles of Christianity; and that it is the duty of every member of the Freewill Baptist community, in every station and condition, to guard with the utmost vigilance and care against any innovation upon this sacred principle: that this ancient landmark, so judiciously set by the fathers, be not removed.”

We give space to the following, too, as revealing their minds as to how the conference should be constituted.

“Agreed that, as the great Head of the Church has so abundantly blessed the Freewill Baptist community, with regard to numbers, that all the members cannot possibly meet at one time and place, in a house made with hands, for the transaction of business pertaining to Zion; consequently it is proper and important that these concerns be conducted by a delegation of the whole; and that in making choices of this delegation, the body is under no obligation to make their election from the ministry, in consequence of their being ministers; nor from any other church office; but that it is the duty of the church to select those members who, in their opinion, are best calculated to represent their state, and express their views and wishes in the General Conference.”

The Ninth General Conference

The ninth session of the General Conference was held at Greenville, Rhode Island, beginning October 4, 1837. Rev. Joseph M. Harper was moderator. It was a very pleasant session. Many important questions came before the body and much interest was manifested in each question. Part of the meetings were held in an

academy—the business sessions and meetings of worship were held in the church, three church services per day. These services were reported to have been very refreshing to those who attended.

A letter from the General Baptists in England was received, enclosing a copy of a resolution recently adopted by that body in condemnation of American slavery, and in approbation of the position taken by the General Conference in opposing it.

Reports from the yearly meetings showed the following synopsis:

In New Hampshire and Kennebec Yearly Meetings the Lord seemed to be still smiling. Revivals were had in most of the churches and many additions noted. There was no report received from Parsonfield Yearly Meeting, and the report from Vermont was very incorrect, but improvement was being sought. In Penobscot, Holland Purchase, Susquehanna, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Yearly Meetings prosperity was reported in some churches and in others the interest was low.

The report of the trustees of the printing establishment showed that enterprise was progressing nicely. *The Morning Star* was receiving a good patronage and was carrying its part of the responsibilities of the movement well. Several thousand copies of books and periodicals had been sold.

On education, the following report might be of interest: "It is with pleasure and unfeigned gratitude to God that we witness the increasing interest now felt on this subject by the Free Will Baptist denomination, and that we have good reason to hope the time is not far distant when, in point of learning, as well as piety and usefulness, we shall compare with other Christian denominations." They were rejoicing in the prosperity of their institutions of learning.

On the point of slavery it seemed that they were becoming fanatical. They refused to receive into their fellowship, churches and ministers from Kentucky who were worthy in every respect ex-

cept for the slaveholders in their membership. They also withdrew from the conferences in North Carolina for no other reason than that there were slaveholders within their membership.

The statistical table showed that there were 63 quarterly meetings, 804 churches, 35,739 members; 5,040 added since last session of conference.

The Tenth General Conference

This session met at Connecut, Ohio, October 7, 1839; the same man presided at this session. It is stated that this session was well attended and that the decisions on all important questions were given with great unanimity. The two resolutions that created the most interest were: The one that "recognizes no man as a minister of our denomination unless he be a member of some one of our churches; and the one "affirming that baptism is not an essential prerequisite to the Lord's Supper."

A letter and messenger from the Michigan Yearly Meeting was received into the fellowship of the body. This yearly meeting had been organized just recently.

It was resolved to correspond with the General Baptists in England by delegate at as early *date* as possible.

The missionary board resolved to send three new missionaries to India during the coming winter.

The following resolution which passed this session might be of interest:

"All true believers of every denomination are one in Christ, that sectarian controversy and proselytism are highly detrimental to the interest of religion, and that all Christians of every name are bound to seek to build each other up in the faith of the gospel; and that while we have a right, and ought to preach and defend the faith once delivered to the saints as we understand it, yet we should never denounce or indulge an uncharitable spirit toward our brethren of other evangelical denominations whose sentiments differ from our own."

The statistics at this time were 830 churches, and 38,810 members; the increase in membership was given at more than 1,000.

The Eleventh General Conference

This session was held at Topsham, Maine, commencing October 6, 1841. Rev. J. M. Harper served as moderator again. Eleven yearly meetings reported, and it is stated in the remarks that all reported general prosperity and a greater increase in membership than usual.

A letter was received from a new yearly meeting in New York and Pennsylvania; it was admitted into the conference.

Admission of the Free Communion Baptists into the conference was consummated at this session, giving them the right to retain the name, Free Communion Baptist, if they chose to do so.

It might be well to state that in the record is a copy of a resolution passed by the Free Communion Baptists as follows: "Resolved, that we consider the name, Free Baptist, Free Communion Baptist, Freewill Baptist, and Open Communion Baptist, as designating the same people." And the record shows that the General Conference concurred with them so far as they relate to the two bodies.

The report on the printing establishment showed prosperity and progress. The circulation of the *Morning Star* had increased and the sales of books and periodicals were growing.

The following is said about their missions: "In view of the signal blessing of God, by which our missionary operations have been crowned with more than ordinary success, and our most sanguine expectations more than realized—therefore, agreed, that there is abundant reason for devout thanksgiving and praise to God."

They and the General Baptists of England continued to carry on an enthusiastic correspondence; the enthusiasm seemed to be mutual.

The benevolent societies of the movement met in connection with the General Conference the first time.

The statistics showed 91 quarterly meetings, 989 churches, 47,478 members; 10,979 were shown to be added since last conference.

The Twelfth General Conference

This General Conference convened at Plaintiff, New York, October 2, 1844. Rev. Jonathan Woodman was its moderator. There were twelve more delegates to this than any previous General Conference. The great revivals of 1842, made great accessions to this movement, so that the number of members was greater than it had ever been before.

Eight yearly meetings were received into the conference at this session: The Indiana Northern, Genesee, St. Lawrence, Illinois Northern, New York Central, Union, Pennsylvania and Marian Yearly Meetings.

A letter was received from the Balasore Quarterly Meeting in India, requesting to be received into the conference; also one from Orissa Quarterly Meeting, India.

New Hampshire reported some great revivals within her borders, but that things had quieted down somewhat; however, the movement in that state was in good condition.

The movement in Maine was reported in a steadfast condition, but not many revivals.

Vermont reported general steadfastness; some trials in consequence of the doctrine of *Millerism*—the soon coming of the Lord. Miller predicted the sure coming of the Lord in 1843.

The religious interest in Holland Purchase, New York, was represented as being at a low ebb. Massachusetts and Rhode Island were represented in about the same condition.

The condition was not good in Ohio, for the want of preachers mostly. The state of the movement in Michigan was good, but no revivals were mentioned.

The printing establishment was still growing nicely; the interest in the foreign fields was good, and the educational interests were prosperous and growing too.

The overall condition of the movement must have been pretty good, as it is stated in the remarks that "More than thirteen thousand were added to our beloved denomination."

The Thirteenth General Conference

This session of the General Conference convened at Sutton, Vermont, October 6, 1847. Elder Jonathan Woodman presided. Most of the yearly meetings were represented. The conference itself was an interesting meeting; many important questions came before the body and were settled with reasonable unanimity.

The conference received a letter from the General Baptists of England and seated their two delegates, Elder Jabez Burns, D. D. of London and Joseph Goadby of Leicester.

Reports from the several yearly meetings showed the following status: In New Hampshire, both the churches and the ministry seemed to be functioning right along, "But," they say, "the cries of the penitent and the shouts of the redeemed have only occasionally been heard. The servants of the Lord have invested too much of His money in railroads; and the poisonous dregs of Millerism have settled down in most of our churches, and alienated some of our best brethren. Our number is less than at the last conference, but we trust that our Christian influence has not diminished with our numbers."

In Parsonfield and Penobscot Yearly Meetings in Maine, the status was low. The slavery question was causing a division in Parsonfield. The state of religion was low also in Ohio Northern, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. They had no reports from the following: Ohio, Ohio River, Michigan, Indiana Northern and St. Lawrence Yearly Meetings.

General steadfastness was reported in the Kenebec, Vermont,

Holland Purchase, Susquehanna, the Ohio and Pennsylvania, New York and Pennsylvania Genesee, Illinois Northern, New York Central, the Union, the Pennsylvania, the Marion, the Ohio, the Indiana and the Wisconsin.

The printing establishment was represented as in fine condition and functioning well. Articles of incorporation had been granted it by the state of New Hampshire, and it was now in a condition to do business properly. It was reported as being free from debt and having on hand about \$4,500.00.

It might be well to state just here that the records of this General Conference report the death of the man who promoted this institution and carried it through all its critical periods and on to success. This man was Elder David Marks. He was appointed the first agent of the book concern without being given one cent of money. To do what the General Conference asked him to do, it became necessary for him to pledge his own property, and the property of a few friends whom he induced to assist him in the perilous undertaking, to obtain the necessary funds to put this matter over:

“For the publication of the whole amount of \$4,000 value, the book agent, David Marks, has made himself accountable, contracting all the debts on his own private responsibility. We can but speak highly of the faithfulness and ability with which Brother Marks has conducted the business in all its parts.”⁶

He traveled by horseback and on foot through several states and in all kind of weather and under many adverse circumstances in order to put the effort over. The record of the Twelfth General Conference gives his farewell words to the body. This is the account: “Remarks, peculiarly touching and appropriate, were made by several brethren, and none who witnessed the scene can forget how Brother Marks rose in the pulpit, and exhausted with his labor as reporter, and with tremulous voice and falling tears, said, ‘I thank my heavenly Father for the strength He has unexpectedly given to me to come to this conference, and see so many that are

dear to my heart. My feeble health admonishes me that probably this will be the last time that I shall see your faces in this world, and that I have for the last time reported your speeches. But I thank God that for me to live is Christ, to die is gain. I would ask you all to pray for me.'” Surely enough, he died before this General Conference met.

The statistics show 115 quarterly meetings, 1,178 churches, and 51,944 members at the convening of this session of General Conference.

The Fourteenth General Conference

This meeting took place at Providence, Rhode Island, commencing October 2, 1850. Elder Martin Cheney was moderator. It met the first week in the old Roger Williams Church, and the second week in the church at Olneyville, one mile distant.

The number in attendance exceeded that of any previous conference; it was one of much interest and importance. The presence of Dr. Sutton from the General Baptists in England added not a little to the interest of the meeting. There were present also several other corresponding delegates from other denominations, who also added to the interest of the meeting. Reports were received from twenty-five yearly meetings; only one is mentioned as not reporting, the Ohio River Yearly Meeting.

In New Hampshire the state of the movement in some quarterly meetings was good; they were represented as increasing in energy, intelligence, faith and numbers; but others were in a languishing state. The numbers on the whole had decreased since the last General Conference.

In Maine the movement seemed to have been in a more prosperous condition. Besides prosperity in other matters, it seemed that many churches had enjoyed revivals, and these were becoming a scarcity in the boundary of the movement at this time.

Vermont complained of some dearth in religious matters. The churches in this yearly meeting were generally small and scattered.

Many did not sustain preaching; but when they did, Sunday schools and various causes of benevolence prospered.

New York seemed to be somewhat like New Hampshire. Some quarterly meetings were prosperous; others were declining. Holland Purchase sent up a very cheering report; an increase in interest was reported along all lines. But the interest in other parts was not so good, and in some parts was very low.

Reports from Pennsylvania represented the movement in that state very much like that in New York; in fact most of the yearly meetings in these two states were located in both, and were very closely connected.

In Ohio they had about the same condition prevailing: prosperity in some parts; low interest in others.

In Rhode Island and Massachusetts the interest was represented as being steadfast. The same might be said of Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Canada.

The greatest one cause of the lack of prosperity seemed to be the lack of ministerial service. It seems the itinerant form of ministry that once prevailed among these folk was ceasing; many of the leading ministers were settling down to full-time services in one church or one town and were not covering the territory once covered by men like Randall, Stinchfield, Whitney and Colby: in fact, like most of the old ministry. In looking back through the minutes of this body, too, it seems to us that they were taking too much interest in slavery; they had become fanatical in their opposition to slavery, so much that it was absorbing a great part of their time, study and interest. They were getting to the point where they took more interest in political slavery than they did spiritual slavery. As a result of their attitude, there was dissatisfaction, envy, strife and divisions among them; and where these are, the cause of God can't prosper.

We find this item in the record: "Whereas, generally speaking, a great declension pervades the churches of our beloved Zion; we deem it our indispensable duty to search out, and, if possible, to remove the cause."

Three new yearly meetings were admitted to the fellowship of the General Conference: Canada, West Yearly Meeting and Illinois Central.

Elder Gardner Dean appointed by the Rhode Island Christian Conference as a corresponding delegate to this General Conference was seated with permission to participate in the deliberation; also Elder George W. Harn was seated as a corresponding delegate from the Church of God; a body of religious people located mostly in Pennsylvania, who at that time had 100 churches, 110 ministers, and 13,000 members.

The statistics show that they had 115 quarterly meetings, 1,158 churches, with a membership of 49,657.

The Fifteenth General Conference

The General Conference met this time at Fairfield, New York, October 5, 1853. Elder F. W. Straight presided over the meeting. This session was said to have had the greatest number of delegates in attendance of any of the previous meetings. Two new yearly meetings were received at this General Conference—the Iowa and St. Joseph's Valley Yearly Meetings.

Correspondence with the English General Baptists was continued just as it has been for several years. This correspondence was very warm and enthusiastic on both sides.

Three of the yearly meetings made no report to this conference—The Ohio, the New York, and the New York and Pennsylvania. Reports from other yearly meetings indicated an increase in interest and prosperity over last year. The movement was becoming more steadfast and taking a greater interest in education, missions and, in fact, all the various interests of the movement. Most of the yearly meetings reported revivals.

Dr. G. H. Ball was sent as a corresponding messenger to the people denominated *The Church of God*. His report to the conference was: "I could but say after learning their religious position and character, 'Go on, and may God bless you.'" He said that they

were doing a good work in their own way. The historian, Mr. A. D. Williams, was appointed to continue the correspondence with this people.

The Sixteenth General Conference

The sixteenth session of General Conference convened at Mainville, Ohio, on October 1, 1856, with Elder E. Knowlton presiding. At this the last session of General Conference of which we have the minutes we will give a more extended account of the conference itself.

Mainville is a small, beautiful village, one mile from the railroad and about twenty miles from Cincinnati. The most ample provision was made for the entertainment of the conference, and all found homes within a half or three-quarters of a mile from the meetinghouse. And such homes! They were enough to quiet the most discontented. The evidence of a hearty welcome with which delegates were greeted, and the unwearied efforts to anticipate their desires and provide for their every want, added very essentially to the pleasure of the occasion. Singular to tell about that latitude, the ground was white with snow on the morning that conference opened in October. Afterwards the weather was warm and most delightful.

Forty-seven delegates were present at the morning devotions when conference opened, and the congratulations were happy and earnest. The presence of Elder Jeremiah Phillips, one of our first missionaries to India, was hailed with joy. But very few of the members were aged men, most of them were in middle life.

All the yearly meetings reported except the Pennsylvania. Improvement is noticeable in all the yearly meetings save five—Vermont, Holland Purchase, Illinois Northern, Marion and Illinois Central. Religious interest in Vermont was said to be suffering from lack of a literary institution. There was a need for preachers in some and a migration in others. There seemed to be a marked improvement in the Rhode Island and Massachusetts Yearly Meet-

ings. Some of the churches were enjoying revivals; there had been several church buildings erected and several were in process of erection. Soundness and steadfastness were marked in all the reports except the five.

Most all of the institutions of the movement were doing well. Good interest was being manifested in foreign missions. The educational institutions were moving along nicely. The printing establishment was growing stronger all the time.

The table shows the following statistics: 126 quarterly meetings, 1,150 churches, 48,974 members, 924 ministers and 147 licentiates.

Growth

The movement began in 1780, and by 1782 they had gathered congregations, some of which were very large. In 1826 they numbered 17,000 members in six yearly meetings. In 1830 there were seven yearly meetings and 21,499 members; in 1840 seven associations or yearly meetings and 21,499 members; in 1840, thirteen yearly meetings and 41,997 members; in 1860, 31 yearly meetings with 58,441 members; in 1880, 41 yearly meetings with 78,012 members; in 1908, they had 1,292 churches, in 68 yearly meetings and associations, containing a membership of 87,015. This membership was scattered throughout the New England and Middle States and those states north of the Mason and Dixon Line as far as Wyoming. A part of the Free Will Baptists in Oklahoma and Texas were included also in this number.

New Hampshire: We have already given the early history of this movement in this state, together with that of the states of Maine and Vermont, rather fully in order that the reader could see how the God of heaven blessed the movement; they were blessed with good and better revivals, over and over, as the years passed by. From now on we shall give a brief account of its spread into the different states mentioned.

In 1908 New Hampshire had a membership of 6,701 members in 95 churches with eight associations and yearly meetings.

Maine: As has already been seen, the movement spread from New Hampshire into Maine, and we have given the early history of it in that state. At the merger in 1911, they were all united in one associated fellowship—The Maine Free Baptist Association. Its membership in 1908 was about 12,000.

Vermont: The movement next spread into Vermont and the first church was formed under the preaching of John Buzzell at Strafford in 1793. The membership in 1908 was 1,610.

Massachusetts: Seemingly, it spread next into the state of Massachusetts. A goodly number of churches had been formed in this state by the Roger Williams movement before the Randall movement began; several churches in Franklin, Hampshire and Berkshire Counties united with the Dover Quarterly Meeting in Vermont in 1822. The Boston Quarterly Meeting was formed in 1837, having 310 members; it became the Massachusetts Association in 1882. The movement numbered about 2,697 in 1908.

New York: For the early history of the Arminian, or Free Will Baptist movement in this state, see *History of the Free Will Baptists in the Middle States*. The Randall movement spread into New York and Pennsylvania about the same time.

The Bethany Quarterly Meeting was formed in 1813, and the Erie and Benton Quarterly Meetings in 1818; of course there were churches before this date. In 1908 New York had six associations or yearly meetings, two of them lap over into Pennsylvania. The Central Association was one of them and represented the larger part of the membership in either of the states; it had a membership of near 8,000. The yearly meetings had a membership of 11,896 in 1908.

Rhode Island: The first Baptist church in America was formed in this state at Providence in 1638 under the instrumentality of Roger Williams; at the time of its formation, the question as to whether those going into its formation were Arminian or Calvinistic

was not mentioned, for this matter was not raised in England until the years 1639-1643; but it is evident that this matter came up for consideration in this church in 1652, for there was a division in the church on that point.

Mr. Vedder says that a minority of the church, with its pastor, Thomas Olney, was Calvinistic; and that that part of the church became extinct about the year 1720. He says further that a majority of the church "adhered to Wickenden Brown and Dexter"⁷ and identified themselves with the Sixth Principle Baptist people in that section.

However, the doctrine of Calvinism was brought up again in the church under the influence of Professor Manning who was with the Rhode Island College at the time, and a section of the church, it seems, lined up with the Particular Baptist point of view; but the pastor of the church, Elder Samuel Winsor, with 86 members, remained true to the old principles of the church, calling their section the Roger Williams Church. This was in 1774. This body of worshipers became affiliated with the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting in 1837 and thus took on the name, Free Will Baptist.

This church was still alive in 1907: at a home-coming celebration, August 3 of that year it still claimed to be the church formed by Roger Williams in 1638; it traced its history back to that time. At that time it was the oldest Free Will Baptist church in America, being 269 years old. See this matter explained fully in the history of the *Roger Williams Branch* in this book.

The second church at New Port in this state was formed in 1656 and was still in the Free Will Baptist faith and practice at the close of the nineteenth century. Rhode Island had a membership of 3,640 in 1908.

Ohio: The first church was formed in this state at Rutland in 1810 by Elder Eli Steadman; the first quarterly meeting was formed in 1814, called the Athens Quarterly Meeting. Ohio had a membership of 1,790 in 1908.

⁷ Vedder, *idem*.

Indiana: It seems that Marcus Kilborn was the first of this movement to preach in the state; he settled in southeastern Ohio in 1820 and soon afterwards formed the Bryant's Creek Church. Elder Hutchins visited these people in 1827, and other churches were formed; the Miami Quarterly Meeting was also formed. Many other quarterly meetings were formed in the state, but it suffered very much by its membership moving into other territory.

Michigan: Elder John Norton came to the state in 1826 and the Bruce Church was formed under his ministry. Elder H. S. Linbocker and Porter Thomas soon followed, and other churches were formed. The Oakland Quarterly Meeting was organized in 1832, and the Michigan Yearly Meeting in 1839. The movement in this state exerted a strong influence on the movement as a whole through Hillsdale College. The membership in this state was 6,000 in 1908.

Wisconsin: The Randall Movement was introduced into this state by Rufus Cheney who moved into the state in 1838 and settled at New Berlin where he formed a church in 1840 and one at Honey Creek in 1841. Messengers from these churches formed the Honey Creek Quarterly Meeting in 1842. The Wisconsin Yearly Meeting was formed in 1845. Twelve other quarterly meetings were soon added. It had around 1,500 members in 1908.

Illinois: Really the movement had a beginning in this state before it did in Wisconsin. The Walnut Creek Quarterly Meeting was formed July 4, 1839, by Elder Samuel Shaw, Luther Driscoll and Thomas Caine.

There were several meetings in Illinois at the beginning of the twentieth century, and its membership was considerable.

Iowa: The first church of this movement was formed by Elder N. W. Bixby and his wife who were in the service of the Home Mission Society. They came to the state in 1847 and formed the Delaware and Clayton Quarterly Meetings in 1848. Twelve other quarterly meetings were formed by 1874; the Iowa Yearly Meeting was formed in 1851.

Minnesota: The first church in this state was formed in Minneapolis in 1854; Elder Charles G. Ames was its first pastor. Soon Elder W. Hayden took up the work, and other churches were formed. The Hennepin Quarterly Meeting was formed in 1858. The Minnesota Yearly Meeting was formed in 1858. The membership at the merger was around 1,400.

Kansas: The Cherokee Quarterly Meeting in the southeast part of the state was formed in 1868 and seems to be the first work done by these people; it was made up of the Cherokee City, the Centre Creek, and the Pleasant Valley Churches. Rev. J. B. Fast and Rev. R. Gatliff were the ministers. Several churches and quarterly meetings followed later, and the Kansas Yearly Meeting was formed in 1869. The denominational interests suffered much in this territory from moving population and the lack of preachers.

Missouri: The Randall movement took hold in this state probably with the formation of the St. Francois Quarterly Meeting in 1869. The first churches were the church on Doe Run, another near Delassus and a third near Loughboro. Seven other local bodies were soon added, and the Missouri Association was formed; this association was called the Western Missouri Yearly Meeting after 1885, and the Central Yearly Meeting after 1888. Quite an interest was established in the state by these people which afterward must have served as a foundation for the present interests in the state. The early ministers were: Isaac Johnson, H. Green, C. Miller, William Carter, B. Mason, H. Patterson, J. Brown and R. G. Holmes.

Nebraska: The Salem Quarterly Meeting seems to be about the first work done in Nebraska by these people; it was formed in the southeast part of the state in 1870. The first ministers were B. Richey, A. Curtis, K. R. Davis, and Dr. R. Dunn. The first two churches were Salem and Palmyra churches. Nine quarterly meetings were formed by 1887; the Nebraska Yearly Meeting was formed in 1883 with the Cass and Batin Quarterly Meetings.

Kentucky: There were a number of other religious people in Kentucky that taught practically the same doctrine and practice

as the Randall Movement, but it did not take a very extensive hold in that state. The Union Quarterly Meeting was formed in 1871, having seven churches; the Eddyville Quarterly Meeting in 1873, having five churches; the Johnston in 1879, having three churches; the Lewis was also formed in 1879 with two churches. The Kentucky Yearly Meeting was formed in 1878 and was reasonably strong in 1908.

California: A church was formed in this state in 1876 known as the Union Square Baptist Church of San Francisco. In 1883 it affiliated with the Free Baptist movement.

A mission was formed in Oakland in 1886, with Professor Meads of Bates Theological School as superintendent; it became a church in 1887. The Golden Gate Association was formed in 1889 of these two churches. Other churches were formed, and the Pacific Coast Free Baptist Union was formed.

Final Summary or Recapitulation

It seems to us that it can be truthfully said the Randall Movement was approved and blessed by the God of heaven. Randall and his colleagues in their early ministry were continually blessed in the efforts which they put forth to bring about the salvation of souls. By following the reports of their ministers and churches to the General Conference, the reader will note that revivals were enjoyed by their churches continually up to and almost through the nineteenth century. Revivals were not enjoyed as often after the middle of that century.

Those people manifested a greater interest in education than any other religious body whose history we have studied. At their union with the Northern Baptist Convention in 1911, they had three schools of academic grade, six colleges, and two theological seminaries. When we remember that their membership was only 87,015, it seems to us that is doing extremely well.

They were carrying on quite a little foreign mission work at the same time. Their foreign mission work in India began in

1835; by 1900 they had 17 missionaries in the field, 8 on furlough, and 63 native assistants; the visible results of their work in India at that time were one yearly meeting, two quarterly meetings and 18 churches; they had 45 ministers and a membership of 1,487, had 4,365 Sunday school pupils, and 4,437 pupils in day school.

Their yearly meeting in India had a theological school with \$10,000 endowment funds; they also had a high school with 196 students. They had a permanent fund of \$82,033.48 on hand.

They also had a mission in the Barbadoes; there were four churches, four ministers and 316 members in it. They also had a small mission in Africa.

Union of the Randall Movement With the Northern Baptists

In 1905 a committee was appointed by interests representing the Northern Baptist Convention to confer with a like committee appointed to represent the Randall movement, to survey the chances for union of the two religious bodies; these committees recommended jointly that such a move was feasible; among the things said in their words of recommendation was this statement which we think should be preserved: "It is recognized as a fact that the original occasion and cause of separation between our two bodies have practically disappeared, and that in all the essentials of Christian doctrine as well as church administration and polity we are substantially one."

A basis of union was agreed upon and submitted to the various organizations interested; it was approved on the part of the Randall Movement by the General Conference in 1909, and on the part of The Northern Baptist Convention by most of those properly interested, the same year. The union was fully consummated October 5, 1911.

Statements in the Basis of Union

Besides that given in the recommendation of the two committees already quoted, we quote the following:

“The Baptists today have little, if any more sense of restriction in their Calvinism than Benjamin Randall had in 1780.”

Again: “Since that time (1780—Randall’s time) the denomination has maintained its original confidence in the Scriptures, its testimony to the New Testament church and baptism, its evangelistic zeal, and its missionary activity. Its articles of belief are not dissimilar to those of the Baptists in any vitally important point.

“In New Durham, New Hampshire, he had preached and made many converts. At the request of these converts he was ordained, and a church was formed. This was in 1780. It was a Baptist church, but held less rigid Calvinistic views than were common.

“They were neither Calvinists, nor Arminians, but only plain Bible reading Baptists.”

This basis of union was endorsed by the Northern Baptist Convention and The American Baptist Missionary Union, The American Baptist Home Mission Society and the American Baptist Publication Society for the Baptists. It may be found in full in our history published in 1911.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORY OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS IN
THE UNITED STATES

(Southern States)

Introductory Articles

Before beginning the history of the Free Will Baptist proper, we wish to give an account of the founding of a church in Boston: "In 1794, Mr. Healey and wife, Matthew House and wife, and William Lynes and wife, all members of the General Baptist Church at Friar Lane, Liecestershire, England, having resolved to come to America, covenanted together before they departed to remain together as a religious body. They reached New York in October, 1794, and remained there till the following spring when they went to Boston, Massachusetts, where they commenced meeting as a religious society."

In 1797, they built a house of worship, 40 by 27 feet, but Mr. Healey left the congregation to go south and it is said to have become extinct. Mr. Healey went to Baltimore, Maryland, where he formed the Second Church in Baltimore and served that church for fifty years as pastor.

A Letter to The Morning Star, 1907

(To the Editor of The Morning Star)

Dear Sir:

The English Baptists who originated in Amsterdam and settled in London during 1611 organized on Presbyterian lines during the Commonwealth, and by 1654 were holding general assemblies. The Baptist Historical Society of England has been permitted to publish the official records from 1689 till 1811, and has supplimented these with notices of the first thirty years. Light is thrown on the contest with Calvinism, on the abandonment of coercive jurisdiction, on the rigid discipline of early days, on remarkable modi-

fication of doctrine, with three disruptions resulting therefrom, and on many other remarkable points.

These General Baptists sent evangelists to Virginia, Carolina, and Maryland; and the story of their work, with that of other pioneers in and near Rhode Island, has been briefly told in an appendix to the minutes. It deserves closer study and a fuller treatment from American scholars.

The society has made many remarkable discoveries, and within its first two years has shown that Leonard Busher, who pleaded for toleration in his *Religion's Peace*, was no Englishman, but a Dutchman; that Vavasor Powell, the Welch evangelist, came to abandon Calvinism and its doctrine of a limited grace; that one of John Bunyan's books has been dated too late; that it was largely Baptist tenacity which compelled Charles II to grant indulgencies in 1672; etc. It has lately issued a contemporary paper telling of Puritans settling in during 1622, and in the old colony during 1636. American scholars who are interested in such work are invited to communicate with the undersigned. The annual subscription is \$1.25; the two volumes of minutes are \$8.75 additional.

W. T. Whitley
53 West Cliff
Preston, England

Mr. Whitley was a historian and was on the executive committee of The Baptist World Alliance, which you will find an account of in this book.

Virginia and the First Free Will Baptist Church in the South

We will next turn our attention to the origin of the General Baptist movement in Virginia. Near the close of the seventeenth century, or about 1700, a number of General Baptists came over the waters from England and settled in the county of the Isle of Wight in Virginia. They formed themselves into a band of worshipers, but being destitute of a teacher, they sent a request to England

for one. The English General Baptists, on receiving the request, ordained to the ministry Robert Nordin and Thomas White and sent them over to take charge of these people. Soon after their ordination they set sail for America. Mr. White died on the way, but Mr. Nordin arrived safely and at once threw himself zealously into the work which had been assigned him; a church was fully set in order at Burley in 1714. Nordin served the church with zeal, activity and usefulness for a period of twelve years when he was forced to quit the walks of men.

At the request of the church at Burley the General Baptists in England again, in 1728, sent out Casper Mintz and Richard Jones. Jones took charge of the church as its pastor, and Elder Mintz took charge of the work in Surrey where a number of the Burley members had gone and constituted another church. Benedict says these ministers were still living in 1756. Damon C. Dodd, in *The Free Will Baptist Story*, refers to this church (Burley) as a Free Will Baptist church.

About 1743, Baptist missionaries from Maryland entered northern Virginia which was becoming thickly settled; they began active evangelization in Berkeley, London, and Rockingham Counties. The prime movers in this evangelistic undertaking were Edmund Hays and Thomas Yates from the Chestnut Ridge Church in Maryland. Loveall, Heton and Garrard labored conspicuously in this territory also. Garrard came from Pennsylvania in 1754. Vast crowds would assemble to hear these men preach in their leafy shades and bush arbors and great interest was manifested. As a result, the Opeckon Church was formed in 1743, and later Ketoc-ton and other churches were formed. About this time Shubael Sterns, who had been active in the New Light, or Separate movement, was converted to the Baptist position on baptism; he united with a Baptist church and was baptized by Wait Palmer at Tolland, Connecticut, May, 1751, and was immediately ordained to the ministry in which capacity he did great service. Soon after his ordination, he moved to Virginia where he labored for some time, then into North Carolina. Under the labors of this man and

others, a great interest was gathered which was denominated Separate Baptists. At the close of the eighteenth century they were the most numerous Baptist movement in the United States. The greater portion of them were Arminian in faith and practice. This statement is verified by the fact that at the union, formed by them and the Particulars, the article, "The preaching that Christ died for every man should be no bar to fellowship," was adopted. This article would have been unnecessary had they been Calvinistic.

Maryland

North Carolina would be next chronologically, we suppose, in our history of the Free Will Baptists in the Southern States; but as most of our history leads off more directly from that state, we shall take its history later, after that of Maryland and South Carolina. Maryland is therefore next in our line.

In the early days when Maryland was a province, the religious people of that province enjoyed considerable freedom in those matters. The Baptists here enjoyed liberty of worship while those across the Potomac in Virginia suffered considerable persecution.

In 1709 Henry Sator, sometimes written Henry Saytor, a representative General Baptist from England, landed in Maryland and began at once the propagation of General Baptist principles. He extended a cordial invitation to Baptist preachers to preach in his home, and several of them accepted; among this number were George Eaglesfield, Henry Loveall and others. At this time little attention was paid to the doctrinal difference between the Arminian and Calvinistic Baptists.

The First Church—A church was constituted in 1742 known as Saytor's Church or the Church at Chesnut Ridge. Paul Palmer had baptized nine persons and afterward Henry Loveall forty-eight more, and a church was formed. This was the first Baptist church in Maryland of any kind, and it prospered so much that in four years it numbered 181 members.

In 1743 another church was formed at Opeckon, or Mill Creek.

It originated from the church at Chesnut Ridge, Sayton's Church. In 1754 a church was formed on the Winter Run in Harford County, by a company sent out from Chesnut Ridge.

Mr. Riley says, "The members of Saytor's Church manifested considerable zeal in the early portion of its history, in bringing about the organization of Baptist churches in the northern part of Virginia."¹

The First Church of Baltimore was formed January 15, 1785. Its original members, eleven in number, with the exception of their pastor, Lewis Richards, came from the General Baptist Church at Harford, England. The First Baltimore Church sent out parties which formed the churches at Taneytown and Gunpowder.

About 1727 the Second Church of Baltimore was formed by John Healey, a prominent General Baptist from England at first. Mr. Riley says, "This eminently useful man of God enjoyed the rare distinction of being pastor of the same church for a period of more than fifty years. He also enjoyed the honor of organizing the first Baptist Sunday school in Maryland, and indeed in the South."²

South Carolina

South Carolina seems to have been an exception to the rule. A majority of the first Baptists in this region seem to have been Calvinistic. There were Arminians there, however, and in 1733 a considerable number of the First Baptist Church at Charleston withdrew and formed a General Baptist church at Stono.

It is our opinion that the first Baptists in South Carolina were not very strenuous on particular atonement at first, as they did not adopt the Philadelphia Confession of Faith until 1751. The growing tendency toward the predestination theory no doubt is the cause of the withdrawal of those who repaired to Stono.

In 1736 they sent to England and secured the services of Rob-

¹ Riley, *op. cit.*

² Riley, *idem.*, p. 22.

crt Ingraham as pastor. Henry Haywood from Farnham, near London, was their second pastor. Daniel Wheeler was their third and Caleb Evans their fourth. The ravages of the Revolutionary War caused them to move westward about the year 1783.

North Carolina

We now turn our attention to North Carolina. The exact date of the advent of Baptists into that state cannot be given, it seems. Moore says their advent was in 1653; Knight says that there were General Baptists in the state in 1690; and Edwards says that Baptists were there in 1695. So it is evident that they entered the state near the beginning of the 18th century.

Early Ministers: Paul Palmer and Joseph Parker were two of the early preachers in North Carolina, and were very important in laying the foundation for the Free Will Baptist movement in that state.

It seems that Palmer came to North Carolina in 1720, married and settled down in the state and acquired several acres of land there as a home. Before long we find him preaching to the people of the territory in which he lived; a church was formed in Chowan County in 1727, and the Gum Swamp and Little Creek Churches were formed in 1728.

In 1730 quite a revival broke out under his preaching and continued for some time until finally the attention of the authorities were fixed on his work, and it became necessary for him to obtain a license to preach the Word of God in the province. This he did in 1738.

Palmer was an evangelist of some repute. People fell for his preaching right along, and congregations were gathered of his converts in several places. Other ministers came to his assistance in the formation and pastoring of churches. Mr. Palmer had correspondence with Mr. John Comer, a historian of some reputation at that time, and reported the status of religious matters in North Carolina in 1729. He told Mr. Comer that there was an associa-

tion of General Baptists in southern Virginia, formed in 1720. Palmer belonged to this association, as did some of the churches which were formed from his converts. Later, according to Mr. Riley who is the author of the *History of Baptists in the Southern States*, another association of General Baptists was formed in North Carolina.

In the formation of churches and the care of those early churches after they were formed, Rev. Joseph Parker meant almost as much to this early work as did Mr. Palmer. He was a man of considerable natural ability and was zealous and faithful in his ministerial work in which he spent many years. He meant much to this early work.

In the matter of early Free Will Baptist ministers in North Carolina, Harrison and Barfield say, "We hope the readers will remember that the first Free Will Baptist churches in North Carolina were not organized by men raised in the United States, but by Free Will Baptist ministers direct from London, England."

Knight says that the Free Will Baptists were in North Carolina as early as 1690. Mr. Knight also mentions eighteen churches in North Carolina as organized by Free Will Baptist ministers from London, England. But since the authors do not give the names of the ministers who preached and organized the first churches, we will have to use Paul Palmer's name as the first, because he is the first given by name.

William Sojourner, an excellent Arminian Baptist minister, with a goodly number of his fellow members in the church at Burley, moved from Virginia to North Carolina in 1742 and settled on Kehukee Creek. There they found many Baptists of the same order or kind. He was pastor of this church for several years. Other churches were formed, and all affiliated, at first, we think, with the General Baptist Association as reported by Palmer to John Comer, the historian; but later they formed an association of their own in North Carolina, made up of the churches in that state.

Mr. Dodd calls William Sojourner, or refers to him as a Free Will Baptist minister, and the church from which he and his

brethren came as a Free Will Baptist church. I am sure he is right in doing so, but he forgot that the church was organized in 1714, thirteen years before the church that was formed in 1727 on the Chowan River by Paul Palmer. But neither of these churches is the beginning of the Free Will Baptist denomination. The old Roger Williams Church in Rhode Island, organized in 1638, was still in existence in 1907 and was the oldest Free Will Baptist church in America at that time.

These Baptists prospered greatly. In a few years after the arrival of the brethren from the Burley Church in Virginia, they numbered sixteen churches. Mr. Riley says, "They were very aggressive; their ministers were active and progressive."³

In the early part of their ministry, these men, with the people who affiliated with them, were called Anabaptists by those about them in that territory, and the historians of that day refer to them as General Baptists up until the period covered by Gano, Van Horn and Miller; in fact, until the beginning of the union of all stripes of baptists in 1787-1801, they called themselves *Christians* and their churches *Churches of Christ*. But those who refused to go into the union or merger, were referred to by historians as *Free Willers*. About the close of the union period, those Baptists who refused to join in began to refer to themselves as Free Will Baptists.

Mr. Riley says, "There were a few Free Willers who did not go into the coalition. Eventually they came to be known as Original Free Will Baptists."⁴

In the ministry of these early preachers they were what Free Will Baptists would now say very careless and loose in the reception of members into their congregations. They received folk into the churches without an expression as to whether they had been saved or not. Their Baptist brethren say that they received members without an experience of grace, meaning that they received them without their testifying as to where and when they had been

³ Riley, op. cit., p. 23.

⁴ Riley, idem., p. 345.

saved. But before too long, by the close of that century, they had passed through such a period of trial that those who had not truly been saved were not counted.

Unfair Tactics: The Philadelphia Association of Baptists had become strongly Calvinistic by this time; among them were some ministers who were pretty well trained in polemics, and they devised a scheme to proselyte these ignorant Baptists in North Carolina. Rev. John Gano was sent to carry out the plan. He asked the brethren for an interview; and they, knowing his purpose, refused to grant him one but had a meeting among themselves to decide what to do in the matter. Mr. Gano was informed of their meeting and slipped in, took charge as though it was his meeting, mounted the pulpit and addressed them from the text: "Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye?" Such procedure, full of impudence and arrogance, filled the brethren with confusion and perplexity. It was said that some were convinced of their error and confessed it. Others were too shy to show fight, and so Gano won the first round. The association at Philadelphia then sent the Reverends Van Horn and Miller, also two very able men, to finish the plan of bringing about a unity with the brethren.

The scheme succeeded so well that a minority in nine churches took charge of the affairs in those churches, went over to the Calvinists, and were reorganized. Four churches survived, pulled through the morass, and started anew on the road to victory.

Thus we have traced the early history of the General or Free Will Baptists in North Carolina down to about the time that Gano and others commenced their work. We will return to them again.

We quote now from a letter written by Rev. J. Heath to the *Morning Star* in April, 1827, and published in the paper, June 28, 1827:

"In carefully perusing Knight's history of the early Free Will Baptists, then called General Baptists in America, I find that this work takes up the work of the Free Will Baptists, or the principles

of Christianity promulgated through the Free Will Baptists from the days of the apostles to 1827.

“Mr. R. Knight, pastor of the Scituate Church in Rhode Island and their historian, denominates them Free Will or six-principle Baptists. He connects their history with English Free Will Baptists and blends their history with North and South Carolina, who were organized and pastored by Free Will Baptist ministers direct from London, England.

“Some have fondly imagined that Paul Palmer was the founder of the Free Will Baptists in North Carolina, but this can’t be true; for we find the Free Will Baptists had grown to that extent that they organized themselves together in a yearly meeting as early as 1699, being 28 years before Paul Palmer organized the church at Perquimans. We also find that there were Free Will Baptist churches organized as early as 1690, being 37 years older than the Perquimans Church.” (Rev. T. E. Peden says this church was named Shiloh.)

The above letter is of very great importance in establishing a connection of the four churches of the Old General or Original Free Will Baptists that escaped the transformation and continued steadfast in their original doctrines, and the present Original Free Will Baptists in North Carolina. The reader will bear in mind that in 1807, when Elder Jesse Heath became a minister among the Free Will Baptists of North Carolina, this was only thirteen years after the Meheren Church of which Elder William Parker had been pastor for many years previous to his death, had been absorbed, and these people then claimed to be the direct descendants of the English General Baptists as organized by Elders Paul Palmer, Joseph Parker, William Parker, William Sojourner and others.

Other Churches

They had churches at Toisnot, at the falls of the Tar River, Kehukee, on Fishing Creek, on Reedy Creek, at Sandy Run and one in Camden County. Burkitt and Read say that these were

some of them. Of the church on Reedy Creek these historians say, "Dr. Josiah Hart was the first preacher of the Baptist persuasion that preached here. He came about the year 1750 and preached, and baptized soon after. William Washington, James Smith, Samuel Davis, William Walker and others joined in the work of preaching and baptizing all upon what is called the Free Will Plan, and many came and were baptized. William Walker was chosen from among the rest and called their pastor."⁵

Of the church on Muddy Creek, they say that Jobe Thigpen moved into the neighborhood in 1781, and that he had only begun to preach the year before. "And it appeared that the Lord blessed his labors insomuch that a considerable number were brought to the knowledge of the truth and by him were baptized. But he was a minister of the Free Will order and the members were received on that plan."⁶

This church was finally overhauled somewhat by the Calvinists and united with the Kehukee Association in 1793.

Of the church on the Meheren, in Hertford County, they say, "This church was originally gathered and constituted on the Free Will Plan. Elder Joseph Parker, William Parker, Winfield and others of that order frequently preached here."⁷

Riley says it was organized in 1729 by Joseph Parker. He says Sandy Run was made up of a colony from the Meheren in 1740, and that the church at Kehukee was formed by William Sojourner and a company from the church at Burleigh, Virginia.

The first Baptists in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina were General or Liberal Baptists. There were very few Particular Baptists among them. In proof of this we cite the reader to Benedict, Briggs, Riley, Burkitt and Read.

Burkitt and Read, in speaking of the churches in North Carolina, say, "Most of these churches, before they were ever united in an association, were General Baptists and held with the Arminian

⁵ Burkitt and Read, *op. cit.*, pp. 234, 235.

⁶ Burkitt and Read, *idem.*, p. 298.

⁷ Burkitt and Read, *idem.*

tenets. We believe they were the descendants of the English General Baptists because we find that their confession of faith was subscribed by certain elders, deacons and brethren in behalf of themselves and others to whom they belonged, both in London and several counties in England, and was presented to King Charles II. They preached and adhered to the Arminian or Free Will doctrines and their churches were first established upon this system. They gathered churches without requiring an experience of grace previous to their baptism, but baptized all who believed in the doctrine of baptism by immersion and requested baptism of them.”⁸

Mr. Riley says of the churches in Virginia: “The earliest churches in Virginia, like most of those first organized in the South, were deeply infected with Arminianism. This was due to the fact that many of the earliest preachers in the South came direct from England and were the exponents of the principles of the General Baptists of Great Britain.”⁹

And again Riley says, “Like those of the colonies already noticed, Maryland and Virginia, save that of South Carolina, the Baptists of North Carolina were General Baptists who held that the provisions of the gospel were general in their nature.”¹⁰

L. Potter and W. P. Throgmorton, in their debate held in Fulton, Kentucky, in July, 1887, concede the same thing. Montgomery and Knight, General Baptist historians, say the same.

Riley, speaking again on the same point, says, “Original Free Will Baptists are a remnant of the General Baptists who settled in North Carolina in the first half of the eighteenth century. The territory in North Carolina occupied by them lay contiguous to that which was occupied by the General Baptists in Virginia. In each of these colonies they formed an association. In 1787 the General and Regular Baptists united upon a Calvinistic basis. There

8 Burkitt and Read, *idem.*, pp. 31, 32.

9 Riley, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

10 Riley, *idem.*, p. 24.

were a few Free Willers who did not go into the coalition. Eventually they came to be known as Original Free Will Baptists.”¹¹

The Free Baptist Cyclopedia, in speaking of these people, says, “Through proselyting influences from the Philadelphia Association most of the churches were persuaded to join the Calvinistic Baptists. A remnant rallied and notwithstanding much opposition and many difficulties, they made steady progress; so that in 1832 there were 26 churches and about 2,000 members.”¹²

Paul Palmer was once a member of the Welch Tract Church in Delaware and was baptized in that state by Owen Thomas, its pastor, and was ordained in Connecticut. We think he was ordained by the General Baptists; there were such churches in that state at that time. There was the Groton Church established in 1705, and the New London. After his ordination he went to New Jersey, then to Maryland where he spent some time, and then on to North Carolina where he became connected with the General Baptist Yearly Meeting; historians say that he was one of the ministers of this yearly meeting.

John Comer, a General Baptist historian who lived in New Port, Rhode Island, at that time, says that Paul Palmer informed him in 1729 of this association. He no doubt had met Comer while he was in Delaware and Connecticut. We call attention to these facts and indications because of Elder Palmer’s relationship to the early history of the churches in North Carolina, called later the Original Free Will Baptists. Palmer was instrumental in the formation of several of these churches and very active in the affairs of the denomination at that time.

Summary

In our study of the Arminian, General or Free Will Baptists in the South, the following facts stand out clearly:

Historians tell us that there were such Baptists in North Caro-

¹¹ Riley, *idem.*, p. 345.

¹² *The Free Baptist Cyclopedia*, p. 487.

lina as early as 1690, but they don't tell us of any churches in that state so early.

About the year, 1700, they tell us a number of General Baptists came over the waters from England and settled in the county of the Isle of Wight in Virginia. They formed themselves into a band of worshipers, and not having a pastor, they sent over to England for one. The English General Baptists sent Robert Nordin over, who took charge of this band of worshipers and fully set them in order as a church at Burleigh, Virginia, in 1714. This was the first such Baptist church that we have an authentic account of in the South.

In 1709 Henry Saytor, a representative General Baptist, came over from England and settled in Maryland. He collected a body of worshipers at his own house, calling in Baptist ministers to instruct them as often as he had a chance. Several came and preached and a church was fully constituted in 1742, known as Saytor's Church or the Church at Chesnut Ridge.

As stated above, there were General or Free Will Baptists in North Carolina in 1690; but the first church of which we have an authentic account was the church on the Chowan River in Perquimans County, known then as the Perquimans Church, organized in 1727, also the Gum Swamp and Little Creek Churches, organized in 1728. Then in 1742 William Sojourner, a General Baptist minister, and several of his brethren moved from Virginia into North Carolina and settled on Kehukee Creek.

In 1733 a considerable number of the First Baptist Church at Charleston, South Carolina, withdrew from that church and formed a General Baptist church at Stono, South Carolina. These brethren sent to England in 1736 and secured the services of Robert Ingraham, a General Baptist minister, for their pastor. Henry Haywood from London, England, was their second pastor.

These churches, with others not mentioned, formed an association, or as it was called a yearly meeting. The yearly meeting was formed of the churches in Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. The yearly meeting was formed as early as 1720; it was the

third Baptist association to be organized in the United States and the second Arminian or Free Will Baptist association to be organized in the United States; the Rhode Island Yearly Meeting being the first by a few years. The old Philadelphia Association was formed in 1707, but was a mixed association—composed of Calvinistic and Arminian Baptists until 1742, when it adopted the old Philadelphia Confession of Faith, and thus became a strictly Calvinist association.

The oldest association, or conference, in the National Association held its 200th meeting in 1948. I refer to the Central Conference of North Carolina, which is the successor of what was once called the Old Conference, and this Old Conference was the yearly meeting in which the churches that remained steadfast through the period from 1755-1765 met to confer in matters concerning their welfare.

The reader, we are sure, has noticed that the leaders in all of these leading churches established in these southern states were General Baptists; and quite a few came from the General Baptists in England. Many of them had preachers or pastors sent over to this country by the General Baptists. Nearly all of them, if not all, belonged to the above General Baptist Association. I'm sure you have noticed that historians call them General Baptists. That was true until the days of John Gano, Van Horn and Miller (1755-1765). These people were recognized as General Baptists, but after the days of these ministers, or after 1765, they were known by most historians as *Free Willers*, and the system they operated upon the *Free Will Plan*. Burkitt and Read, who were Calvinistic historians, writing about Baptists in the southern states, called them *Free Willers* and their plan of operation the *Free Will Plan*.

In speaking of these people, Burkitt and Read say, "Most of these churches, before they were ever united in an association, were General Baptists and held with the Arminian tenets. We believe they were the descendants of the English General Baptists. . . . They preached and adhered to the Arminian or Free Will doc-

trines and their churches were first established upon this system.”¹³

If the reader will please notice, these historians in speaking of this people use the words *Arminian*, *General* and *Free Will* interchangeably, having reference all the time to the same people.

Mr. Riley says, “The Original Free Will Baptists are a remnant of the General Baptists who settled in North Carolina in the first half of the 18th century. The territory occupied by them lay contiguous to that which was occupied by the General Baptists in Virginia. In each of these colonies they formed an association. . . . Eventually they came to be known as Original Free Will Baptists.”¹⁴

Mr. Riley, in this statement, makes it clear that even the people who are now known as Free Will Baptists were at first called or known as General Baptists; in other words, the Free Willers of the South, especially those in North Carolina, are descendants of the General Baptists. Paul Palmer himself belonged to the association of General Baptists that he reported to John Comer.

The name *Free Will Baptist*, as applied to a religious body of people, was never used in that way until after the middle of the 18th century; in fact, there was no occasion for its use as such before that period.

The point at issue between the Calvinistic and Arminian Baptists up to the union brought about in 1770-1801 was upon the nature of the atonement made by the Lord Jesus on the Cross. The Arminian Baptists, both in England and America, said that the nature of His atonement made for mankind was general; He tasted death for every man. The Calvinists said that He died for the elect only; and that therefore the nature of the atonement made was particular. The Arminians were called General Baptist because they believed in a general atonement, and the Calvinists Particular because they believed the atonement was restricted to the elect. But in the union referred to above, they adopted new articles of faith in which it was stated that preaching or holding to the theory

13 Burkitt and Read, *op. cit.*, pp. 234, 235, 298.

14 Riley, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man should be no bar to fellowship. When the Calvinists agreed to this statement, they surrendered their old-time position on the nature of the atonement.

But in the argument pro and con after the union, the Calvinists took the position that, if the nature of the atonement was general, no one could avail himself of the benefits of Christ's death but the elect; that the non-elect could not do anything toward his salvation, for he was predestinated for or to hell; that man's will was not free. The argument turned from that time on the freedom of the human will; and those General Baptists that would not go into the union in North Carolina were nicknamed Free Willers for the same reason, i. e., because they taught or emphasized the freedom of the human will.

In the statement of Mr. Riley with reference to the Original Free Will Baptists, if the reader will notice right closely, he states that in each of these colonies, Virginia and North Carolina, they formed an association. This statement indicates that they had two associations, one in Virginia and another in North Carolina. We think that the Old Conference which was succeeded by the present Central Conference in North Carolina was composed of the churches formed in that state by Paul Palmer and his associates, and those churches gathered by William Sojourner, in or near the year 1749.

CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPMENT OF PRESENT SITUATION
IN THE SOUTH

(1755-1830)

The Free Will Baptist people in the South had a much earlier history than the Randall Movement. The first Free Will Baptist church in the South was organized in 1714. The first church in the Randall movement was organized in 1780.

The Free Will Baptists in the South have had a continuous existence since 1714, but in spite of the above facts, the Randall Movement advanced much more rapidly than the movement in the South.

The fact is that in the beginning God blessed the Randall Movement so that it advanced rapidly in organization and education. There was no other denomination of the same size and capacity that exceeded that movement in membership and institutions of learning. It had some of the best in the country, and *The Morning Star* which was their denominational periodical was equal to other such periodicals in the country.

The result was that they attained high places in the estimation of the people of the United States and Great Britain.

The Baptists of the North made overtures to the Randall Movement for a merger in denominational interests. They accepted the overtures as had been set forth heretofore; and now (in 1952), we in the South do not know, except through history, that such a body of people ever existed. We never hear of them if they do exist.

There are many reasons why the Free Will Baptists of the South did not advance any faster than they did. In the first place, they were a simple, innocent-minded people who had a great deal more religion than education. Their Baptist brethren to the North, especially around Philadelphia, were right to the reverse.

They had more education than religion; so they put on a plan to proselyte these Free Will Baptists in the South under the name or pretention of Christian unity. Several of the folk and some of the churches of the South accepted the plan.

This plan, with all its fuss and confusion, stopped the progress of these people for some time. This plan put on by the Baptists of the North, first under the leadership of John Gano, lasted from 1755-1765, and Van Horn and Miller were sent after Gano.

The confusion brought about by these men lasted until the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Battle of Alamance. This occurred in 1775. Riley says concerning this battle: "The clash of arms came at Alamance. The regulators, composed largely of Baptists, were defeated by the Royal forces and fled toward the West. The result was that this portion of North Carolina, from being one of those in which Baptists were more numerous, was almost all together abandoned by them. Fleeing westward into Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia, Baptist churches sprang up wherever they went."¹

This calamity was very severe on the Free Will Baptists in North Carolina and was almost enough to destroy them entirely, but it did not; they were still alive in 1808 and began to take root and grow. Rev. Elias Hutchins, on one of his evangelistic tours, came in contact with this little bunch in North Carolina. There were then 19 churches and 19 ministers. Through Hutchins they learned of the Randall Movement. Hutchins reported the existence of these people to the General Conference of the Randall Movement; that body agreed that the two conferences in North Carolina could represent in the General Conference by sending one delegate each to the next meeting of that body, and they did so.

At the ninth General Conference in 1837, that body withdrew from these two conferences, for the only reason that there

¹ Riley, *op. cit.*

were individual church members in the membership of the two conferences that owned Negro slaves.

This radical attitude and rigid procedure with reference to the matter of slavery alienated the Free Will Baptists in the South from those in the North. And they had not gotten over it entirely when the Randall Movement committed suicide in the merger of October, 1911.

Since the merger, the Free Will Baptists of the South and West have set about to advance and establish their own religious interests and institutions; the Lord is blessing them wonderfully in their efforts and they are making rapid progress.

Recapitulation

In 1752 there were sixteen churches. Six of them went into the Kehukee Association; this left ten to be accounted for otherwise. Five of this number can be named and accounted for somewhat. Gum Swamp, organized in 1728, survived the struggle of 1765 and today is doing a great work. Little Creek in Greene County, organized in the same year, was divided by the efforts of the Calvinists just described and although her pastor and several of the members went to the Calvinistic party, a sufficient number stood firm in the old paths to preserve the identity of the church and she is still alive. Grimsley Church, Greene County, is still alive and true to the faith. Lousan Swamp survived the revolution period spoken of but went off with Mr. Hunnicutt in his raid. Wheat Swamp also survived, but possibly died for lack of pastoral services. It is likely that the greater part of the membership of the remaining four churches migrated into Tennessee and Kentucky.

Morgan Edwards, speaking of this event in 1775, said, "One thousand five hundred families departed since the Battle of Alamance, and, to my knowledge, a great many more are only waiting to dispose of the plantations to follow them." Thus it is sure

that the General Baptists, who were a liberty-loving people, were in this migration, more than likely these five churches.

According to Benedict, Montgomery, etc., these churches had an annual interview or yearly meeting, in which they regulated the general concerns of their churches, which was formed by Paul Palmer, Joseph and William Parker, William Sojourner and others. This had been preserved to the present time.

During the war very little progress along religious lines was made. The work already established had a struggle for existence and consequently very little progress was made by this little body. Many of their membership, no doubt, went West. We find that in 1807 they numbered five churches and three ministers. This statement is based upon what is said by Mr. Stewart, the Free Will Baptist historian.

A period of prosperity soon came, however, to the little flock. She enjoyed peace, and in 1827 the membership had increased to 800. Their leading ministers were: Frederick Fonville, Isaac Pipkin, Henry Smith, Levi Braxton, Nathaniel Lockhart, Reading Moore, Jesse Alpin, Jeremiah Heath, Jeremiah Rome, James Moore and Robert Pond.

At the yearly meeting in 1828 there were 19 churches and 19 ministers, and refreshing revivals were reported. Their faithful stand for the old paths were recognized by the great Master of all things, and they now began to receive the earthly part of their reward.

Division

About this time, for convenience's sake, they were divided into two yearly meetings called conferences. One retained the name of the Old Conference and the other took the name of Bethel Conference.

Campbellism

In 1839 the Old Conference numbered 2,006 members and

32 preachers. Some time between 1839 and 1843 Campbellism struck their ranks. This heresy was embraced by Elder J. T. Latham and a number of other ministers and a sufficient number of the laity so that the membership of this conference in 1843 was only 1,440, with 22 preachers. They soon recovered from this, however, and at the end of four years they numbered 49 churches, 58 preachers and 2,563 members.

Divided on Secret Societies

At the yearly meeting in 1847, however, the foundation of another division was laid which took place in a few years. The subject of the members of the yearly meeting uniting with secret societies had been discussed and much opposition to it manifested; in some churches members had been excluded from the fellowship. Several ministers at this meeting were known to be members of secret societies, and Elder J. F. Jones offered the following resolution: "Shall this conference be a conference with free masonry or a conference without free masonry?" They decided to be a Free Will Baptist conference without masonry.

After the passage of this resolution, several ministers withdrew from the conference. This continued to disturb the work until 1853, when a resolution offered by Elder James Moore passed which left the matter with the local church, giving each one the right to decide for itself. This seems to us the true relation which should have been recognized at the start. But even this failed to give satisfaction and the conference divided, each claiming to be the Old Conference. Some of the officers went with each party and each party therefore chose new officers. One party in a few years ceased to exist as a separate party and some of them went off with Mr. Hunnicutt under the name of Union Baptists. A portion of this denomination (Union Baptists) dropped the word *union* and became simply *Baptists*. This was the party led by Elder Nash. Elder Nash failed in his efforts to unite all stripes of Baptists into one denomination, and so this movement ceased to have an existence. A great many of the churches and mem-

bers, however, came back and became reconciled with the old body. We call the party existing today the old because it adhered to the resolution adopted before the division by a vote of 66 to 36.

This body has always been very jealous of the old paths. Her growth has not been as fast as some but has been steady and continuous.

CHAPTER 6

ORGANIZATIONS LEADING TOWARD
DENOMINATIONAL UNITY

As has been said heretofore, the early Arminian, General or Free Will Baptists in the South were located largely in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. These early Christians had a yearly meeting at which they assembled and considered matters of interest of a general nature. The merger of the different shades of Baptists which occurred in the interval of 1787-1801 left the greater part of the Free Will Baptists located in North and South Carolina.

However, the War of the Revolution of the Colonies which occurred in 1776-1787, and especially the preliminary battle which occurred in 1775, scattered the Baptists. We have already related how that whole communities were vacated because of this migration to the West; Baptists were in this migration.

These early Baptists moved into Tennessee and Kentucky at first, then later into Illinois, Alabama, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. In these early times communication was so poor that it was impossible for the home organization to keep up the proper fellowship and contact with those moving westward; and hence the old general meeting, located mostly in North Carolina, came to serve only that state, and ere long failed to serve the Free Will Baptists in that state as a general meeting.

In time, the leaders among these who had migrated into the new territories began to feel a longing and a definite need for a meeting of a general nature at which they could gather and consult relative to matters which concerned their interests as a whole. As a result of this leading of the Lord in the hearts of our leaders, we find the following efforts creeping out here and there: First, there was the formation of the Southwestern Convention with the intention of taking in all the Free Will Baptists in the states in the Southwest, in 1901; then, in 1916, the Cooperative General

Association was formed; and a little later the Eastern General Conference of the Original Free Will Baptists of the United States. But these all proved unsatisfactory to the leaders of our forces and they got their heads and hearts together to form the National Association of Free Will Baptists. The Lord is blessing that organization wonderfully, and it is moving on to victory.

We will now give the reader a sketch of the history of the first three organizations and then pass on to the National Association.

The Southwestern Convention

This organization was formed in or about 1901 to serve as a means through which Free Will Baptists of the southwestern part of the United States could meet and discuss their needs and make such provisions for the same as they might see fit. It was composed of, and carried on by, the Free Will Baptist associations mainly in Texas and Oklahoma. Although it was meant to include other states in the Southwest, they did not avail themselves of this opportunity. The Randall Movement regarded this organization with such a degree of importance that it kept in pretty close touch with all of its meetings. The General Conference of that movement held at least one of its meetings in this territory.

This convention served the purposes of those who wished to use it for good until the birth of the Cooperative General Association of Free Will Baptists was formed in 1916.

The writer has the minutes of the fifteenth annual meeting of this body which convened with the church at Stratford, Oklahoma, on November 22-26, 1915, and from which the following information is taken:

Representatives from seven associations were present—Texas, Central Texas, West Fork and Central Brazos, from Texas; the Dibble, Canadian and First Oklahoma, from Oklahoma. Rev. E. S. Jameson was president; Rev. T. H. Newsome, secretary; Rev. C. C. Wheeler, treasurer; Rev. J. J. Tatum, southwestern agent. Let-

ters of greeting were received from Rev. Thomas H. Stacy, secretary of the General Conference of the Randall Movement. In their statistical table the statistics from seven Texas associations and ten associations from Oklahoma were given. This showed a total membership of 4,750 in the Texas association and 2,105 from those in Oklahoma.

The Cooperative General Association

As a beginning of the history of this organization we shall quote a paragraph from the report of an interview between Rev. Damon C. Dodd and Rev. John H. Wolfe of Pawnee City, Nebraska:

"Brother Wolfe was instrumental in the reorganizing of the western Free Will Baptist forces. One day, while in conversation with Mrs. Wolfe and the Rev. G. S. Latimer, pastor of the Free Will Baptist Church at Hadden, Kansas, the question arose, 'Why can't we have a conference of Free Will Baptists of the West?' The three of them planned it all out and, the following fall, met with the Missouri State Association and laid the proposal before them. It was accepted by Missouri, and the time and place of the first meeting was set.

"On December 28, 1916, the representatives from Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas met at the Old Philadelphia (Muddy) Church near Plattsburg, Missouri, and perfected the organization."¹

In adopting a name for this body the question arose, "Why not call it General Conference?" It soon became evident that the name, General Conference, was unsatisfactory to many of the denomination in the South because of the treatment of the North Carolina Conference, the General Baptists in Kentucky and other parts had received at the hands of the old General Conference of the Randall Movement.

At the fifth General Conference of that movement in 1831,

1 Dodd, D. C., *Contact*, December, 1953, p. 6.

this item will be noted: "Agreed that the two Free Will Baptists in Kentucky have the privilege of sending one delegate each to the next General Conference." Then, in 1839, they withdrew all fellowship whatsoever from all conferences or associations which had within their membership any slave holders or any institution which recognized or had those owning slaves in their membership. Thus their treatment of the Free Will Baptists of the South became very offensive and created a strong feeling of prejudice toward them in that section. Therefore, the name, *Cooperative General Association*, was adopted.

College Established: At the meeting in December, 1916, a move was passed to establish a college for the Free Will Baptists in the West and Southwest, and they were on the alert for a prospect of that kind. Through correspondence with parties at Tecumseh, Oklahoma, they learned that there was probably such a prospect at that place.

On January 12, 1917, Rev. John H. Wolfe went to Tecumseh to investigate the matter. A meeting of the businessmen of the city resulted in the town's purchasing the Indianola Business College with its five acres of ground lying near the city, having a three-story brick building, forty by sixty feet, and also a frame building, thirty by forty feet, on the plot of ground. In addition to that, \$1,000 in cash was given to help in overhauling the buildings and fitting them to use for college purposes.

The deal was consummated; Brother Wolfe immediately closed his affairs in Nebraska and moved to Tecumseh, arriving there on April 12. He spent most of the summer overhauling the buildings and moving the *New Morning Star* from Weatherford, Texas, to Tecumseh. The moving of the *New Morning Star* he accomplished first and put it in the frame building on the campus.

A curriculum for the college was outlined, a faculty selected and everything made ready for the opening of the school for students on September 12, 1917. John H. Wolfe was president and had charge of the school.

William Fuller of Elk Creek, Nebraska, donated \$500 to the endowment fund; that being the first donation to the fund, the first professorship in systematic theology was named in this honor.

An edition of a Free Will Baptist treatise was published and was very useful with the college work and the welfare of the Co-operative General Association.

A large square house, opposite the college and close by, was converted into a girls' dormitory. Mrs. Sambra Smith was put in charge of the house.

A correspondence school was carried on in connection with the college work, providing three full courses.

The New Morning Star, official organ of the association, got off to a good start under the leadership of a Mr. Morris. Before long, two other papers were consolidated with it: *The Biblical Beacon*, published by Rev. Sambra Smith, was first to consolidate; later W. C. Austin, editor of *The Pruning Hook*, suggested consolidation and turned over his subscription list to Mr. Morris.

Field Reports: During this year they were three field superintendents and each of them made a very good report:

Rev. Ira Waterman of Eldridge, Missouri, reported that he had had 583 conversions in his evangelistic work, had secured 107 subscriptions to the *New Morning Star* and had secured \$1,000 dollars in conditional pledges for the college.

Rev. H. M. McAdams of Tecumseh, Oklahoma, reported 532 conversions in 12 revivals, two churches organized and money collected for the college, publishing house and foreign missions. He was assisted by his wife, Rev. Mrs. Lizzie McAdams.

Rev. W. E. Dearmore reported securing \$639 in cash and pledges for the college, 200 subscriptions for the *New Morning Star* and six revivals held.

Thus it will be seen that this was a very busy and profitable year for the new organization. The Lord had wonderfully blessed them in their effort to establish a college for the Free Will Baptists of the West and Southwest.

First Adjourned Session: The Cooperative General Association held its first adjourned meeting with the College Free Will Baptist Church at Tecumseh, Oklahoma, December 26-30, 1917. Rev. John H. Wolfe presided over the entire meeting. Rev. Ira Waterman was clerk of the meeting.

A welcome address was delivered by Rev. Sambra Smith, pastor of the college church, on behalf of the church. A welcome address was delivered on behalf of the college by its president, John H. Wolfe. On behalf of the churches of the city, a welcome address was delivered by Rev. J. D. Braley, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Tecumseh.

Rev. Charles E. Mann of Missouri gave the response to the welcome addresses and preached the introductory sermon from Romans 8:12.

Petitionary letters were presented by the following associations: Washita, Hopewell, Center and the First Oklahoma from the state of Oklahoma; the Tri-State of Kentucky, West Virginia and Southern Ohio, and the West Fork of Texas. They were properly received and their messengers seated.

A splendid interest was manifested throughout the entire meeting. The attendance was good and the spirit of those taking part in all the services high. Many good discourses were delivered during the sessions. The dedication service on Sunday morning was a proper climax to the meeting.

Rev. John H. Wolfe, president of the college, presented to Rev. C. E. Mann, treasurer and custodian of all legal papers of the association, the deed and abstract of the college property showing no indebtedness on the property. On receiving the deed and abstract, Rev. Mann thanked the people of Tecumseh for the interest they had shown toward the college; then he thanked God for His great leading in the college work.

Rev. Ira Waterman read a Scripture lesson from 2 Chronicles 6:12-22 and offered prayer.

At eleven o'clock Rev. Robert F. Pittman of North Carolina

preached the dedicatory sermon, dedicating the Tecumseh Free Will Baptist College to God. The record says that he preached an able sermon from Genesis 28:17. The sermon was divided into four parts: (1) The necessity of; (2) the purpose of; (3) the work in; (4) the responsibilities of, the house of God. At the close of the sermon Rev. Sambra Smith, pastor of the college church offered the prayer of dedication, and the congregation sang, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

Sunday afternoon Rev. Timothy Murphy of West Virginia led in an old-time covenant meeting. The church covenant was read; all took part in the service and a real feast followed.

At seven o'clock Rev. I. W. Yandell and Rev. D. B. Duniphin preached uplifting discourses; then adjournment was taken to Paintsville Free Will Baptist Church, Paintsville, Kentucky, December 25, 1918.

Reports were taken from the record as follows:

1. College: "This has been a very busy year and we are very grateful to the heavenly Father for His leadership and for the means He has put at our disposal, for the grand and noble body of students He has sent to Tecumseh College, for the goodly degree of health so that we have been able to have a continuous school, notwithstanding the epidemic which has so seriously hampered school work elsewhere."

2. Publishing House: "The Star will be reported by its efficient editors, but suffice it to be said that, from all quarters, the Star office has been growing so that we felt it necessary to add a linotype, a larger cylinder press, a large job press, a mailer, a 25-inch advance paper cutter and two motors for running the equipment. This puts the office in an up-to-date shape, ready to take care of any and all kinds of work making the office valued at \$9,000. We are glad to record the steady advance made in the number of subscriptions and friends added."

3. Field Workers: Rev. Ira Waterman reported 585 conversions witnessed; 340 members received into the congregation; se-

cured 110 subscribers to the Star; raised \$55,000 for the Ayden Seminary.

Rev. H. M. and Lizzie McAdams reported 450 conversions; organized 7 missionary societies; raised \$254.90 for Tecumseh College.

4. Status of the Denomination: From the report of the secretary general we get a *bird's eye* view of the state of the denomination. He begins his year's work with two revivals and the organization of a church in Oklahoma. These revivals he says are "two of the best in my ministry; many precious souls were saved."

He then went to Kansas and Missouri, saying of both these states, "Our churches are progressing nicely." Of the work in Nebraska where he next visited he said, "The Lord is wondrously leading the faithful few in Nebraska." From Nebraska he went to Missouri, visiting many parts of that state and finding a progressive people everywhere. From thence he went to Illinois where he "found many churches anxious to be affiliated with the Cooperative Association." From Illinois he went to North Carolina and attended the North Carolina State Convention which he said "was a great meeting from start to finish." He also reported good interest in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and Michigan.

Session of 1918: This associational year closed with the convening of the above-named association at Paintsville, Kentucky, December 25, 1918.

The same officers were retained for the coming year. The Dibble and Canadian Associations from Oklahoma, the Illinois and Michigan Yearly Meeting and the Cumberland Association of Tennessee were received into the association at this annual session.

This was an interesting and profitable meeting.

Third Adjourned Session (1919): The third adjourned session was held at Nashville, Tennessee, commencing December 24, 1919. Rev. R. A. Roberts presided over the session and W. G. Fields kept the record.

We have no minutes of the meetings in 1919, 1920 or 1921, if indeed there were meetings in 1920 and 1921. It is very probable that there were no meetings of the Cooperative Association in the two last-named years. The meeting held in 1922 is denominated the *Fourth Adjourned Session*.

Fourth Adjourned Session (1922): The Cooperative Association met August 1-6, 1922, labeled in the minutes of this meeting as the *Fourth Adjourned Session*, was held with the Tecumseh Church, Tecumseh, Oklahoma. Rev. B. F. Brown was elected moderator for the ensuing year, and Rev. W. E. Dearmore was elected clerk.

Representatives from the following organizations were seated: Oklahoma State, Missouri State, Nebraska Yearly Meeting; the Dibble, Grand River, Center, First Oklahoma District Association from Oklahoma; the Central Brazos Association from Texas.

It will be noted that not one association or conference of any kind east of the Mississippi River was represented at this meeting of the Cooperative General Association. The reason was, mainly, that eastern Free Will Baptist associations and conferences, a goodly number of them at least, let and organized a general conference of their own named *The General Conference of the Free Will Baptists of the United States*. This action was taken in 1921. It split the Free Will Baptist forces into two parts; but we shall see that a dozen years later this split was healed and they were united again.

The editor of the *New Morning Star* was commended for "the noble work and sacrifice made" by him.

The committee on publication urged the printing of *The Butler and Dunn Theology* and *Christian Baptism* by Ball, as soon as possible.

The college committee recommended considerable repair work be done on the college building.

The finance committee report indicated that the college work was becoming ingrossed in indebtedness.

By 1922 the school had become so involved in indebtedness that the president, Mr. Wolfe, resigned. The interest in the school kept failing and, in 1926, the college buildings burned down and that brought the once bright prospect for education of the Free Will Baptists in the West to a close.

We have no minutes of the proceedings of the Cooperative Association after 1922; but, ere long, a move began to manifest itself to form a national body in which both East and West, and even North and South, could work together.

The Eastern or General Conference of the Original Free Will Baptists of the United States

As has been stated heretofore, the Free Will Baptist forces east of the Mississippi River organized a general conference of their own, thus splitting the Free Will Baptist people in the southern part of the United States into two parts. The fact of the matter was that there were more Free Will Baptists east of that river than there were in the territory west and southwest of it. So this body had a greater number of organizations affiliated with it than were affiliated with the Cooperative Association, especially is that true after this eastern conference was formed.

It was soon seen, however, by the leaders of vision among them in both conferences that a division of their forces was not best for the denomination as a whole—that if their educational and foreign mission institutions, in fact, all their denominational institutions were to succeed, they needed the support of every Free Will Baptist in the denomination. Therefore, efforts to form a national organization to include their various religious efforts began to crop out and find expression at the different conference meetings.

In proof of what we have said, we make the following quotation from the report of the field secretary, Rev. J. L. Welch:

“During the fourteen years since the beginning our our General Conference work, we have been striving to bring together the forces of the Free Will Baptist denomination into one general

or national body. At first, the outlook for this undertaking seemed a very difficult task, but under the leadership of the Lord and with the cooperation of a number of our best workers, we have succeeded in bringing together the greater portion of our people into this organization. The uniting of the General Conference and the Cooperative General Association will be the last major step in that direction so far as organization is concerned. We trust this will be accomplished at this session.

“So far as my contacts with our people show, there is a better feeling among them toward each other and toward the things for which we are all striving. The task before us has not been finished and I am recommending that we continue our efforts along all lines possible for a greater brotherhood.”

We also quote a report of a special committee appointed to work out plans for a merger of the two bodies from East and West:

“We, the special committee appointed at Bryan, Texas, in the 1932 session to work in cooperation with the executive committee of the Cooperative General Association, report as follows:

“1. While at Nashville, Tennessee, in 1933, we worked out what we thought was a satisfactory basis for the merging of the two bodies into one national body or organization. At this, the 1934 session, we met with the executive committee of the Cooperative General Association and found that, for reasons stated below by the above-named committee, the merger could not be perfected at this time. However, assurances were given by the brethren that they would continue to work for the merger until the Cooperative General Association meets in Denison, Texas, in November, 1934.

“Below are the reasons that prohibit the merger at this time:

“‘We, the executive board of the Cooperative General Association, together with members in council, beg to submit the following report: Owing to existing conditions we feel that we cannot proceed further with merger at this time; so we ask that

the matter be deferred for at least one year at which time we hope to be able to settle the matter definitely.

“‘This decision was unanimously and harmoniously agreed upon by all persons concerned, and we wish to add further that we highly appreciate the friendly spirit which is existing between the two bodies at the present time, and our prayer is that it may continue until we can experience even greater things.’” (This statement was signed by Melvin Bingham, chairman of the board, and Winford Davis, moderator.)

“2. We, therefore, recommend that the General Conference appoint a special committee of five to meet with the Cooperative General Association in November in Denison, Texas, with instructions to complete the merging of the two bodies, if possible, on the basis of the 1933 agreement.” (This complete report was signed by Rev. Henry Melvin, secretary of the committee.)

The quotations given above were taken from the reports made at the fifteenth annual session of the General Conference held with Open Pond Church, Jakin, Georgia, June 13-15, 1934. This annual meeting was made up of delegates and messengers from five state conventions and sixteen district associations and conferences. Rev. J. R. Davidson was moderator. This was an enthusiastic and high-spirited conference which did some very profitable work during the session.

CHAPTER 7

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE
WILL BAPTISTS**Organization**

At 7:30 o'clock Tuesday evening, November 5, 1935, in Cofer's Chapel Church, Nashville, Tennessee, the National Association of Free Will Baptists convened in its first session. After a lively devotional service of songs and prayer led by Rev. R. N. Hinant of Micro, North Carolina, Rev. Winford Davis of Monett, Missouri, brought a splendid gospel message to a large congregation of anxious delegates and visitors. After the assignment of homes to those from a distance, an adjournment was taken until 10:30 o'clock Wednesday morning. The organization of the association was deferred until Wednesday afternoon in order to give all delegates ample time to arrive and take part in the organizational work.

At 10:30 o'clock Wednesday morning as per adjournment, a rather large number of delegates and visitors met at the church and engaged in a very spirited devotional service for 30 minutes and then enjoyed a very inspiring sermon by Rev. S. H. Styron of Pine Level, North Carolina. A very delicious dinner was served by the local ladies.

At the time appointed (1:30) the people reassembled, and after appropriate devotions, the business of organization of the association began. Rev. I. J. Blackwelder was made secretary pro tem and the following delegates recognized:

From Alabama—The Alabama State Conference, the State Line, the Progressive, the Southeastern and Mt. Moriah Associations.

From North Carolina—State Convention, Eastern, Western and Cape Fear Conferences.

From Georgia—The Midway and South Georgia Associations.

From Mississippi—Northeast Association.

From Oklahoma—The State and Dibble Associations.

From Missouri—The State Association.

From Nebraska—Nebraska and Kansas Yearly Meeting.

From Kentucky—The Tri-State Association.

From Tennessee—The Cumberland Association.

From Texas—The State Convention and Central Texas Association.

From Arkansas—Rev. L. C. Doyle, Ralph Staten and Brother A. T. Blanks (received as visitors from the Arkansas State Association).

Approximately 60 Free Will Baptist ministers were present from the various bodies. Four committees were appointed at this time:

Committee on Constitution and Bylaws—Henry Melvin, E. S. Phinney, M. L. Hollis, L. C. Doyle (advisory), A. D. Ivey, E. A. O'Donnel, J. E. Hudgens, J. M. Haas and B. F. Brown.

Treatise Revision Committee—J. C. Griffin, C. B. Thompson, M. L. Morse, W. B. Davenport, H. E. Post, E. E. Morris, Ralph Staten (advisory), E. B. Joyner, M. F. Vanhoos, Winfred Davis and J. S. Frederick.

Program Committee—J. L. Welch, Winfred Davis, I. J. Blackwelder and B. F. Rogers.

Publicity Committee—E. C. Morris, Thomas Willey and Melvin Bingham.

The joint educational committee, composed of Selph Jones, Henry Melvin, J. C. Griffin, M. F. Vanhoos and E. A. O'Donnel, was recognized at this time in order that it might report to the association.

The foreign mission work of the old bodies was accepted by this body, and Rev. I. J. Blackwelder was made national secretary-treasurer of foreign missions. A constitution and bylaws were presented by the committee appointed for that purpose and the same adopted. The executive committee required by the constitution

was elected: Rev. J. W. Alford, Kenly, North Carolina; Rev. B. F. Brown, Purdy, Missouri; Rev. D. F. Pelt, Eufala, Alabama; Rev. E. B. Joyner, Lake Butler, Florida; Mr. C. F. Goen, Bryan, Texas.

The league work, the woman's auxiliary work and the Sunday school work that had been sponsored by the General Conference (Eastern) was taken over by the National Association. Rev. Henry Melvin, Durham, North Carolina, was elected as national secretary of the Free Will Baptist League. Rev. Winford Davis, Monett, Missouri, was elected as national secretary of Sunday school work.

At this time the joint educational committee made its report which was accepted. Rev. J. L. Welch, Nashville, Tennessee, was elected as national secretary of education. Five school trustees were elected: two from North Carolina and one each from Missouri, Oklahoma and Kentucky. The joint educational committee was made responsible for sponsoring the educational program.

The Woman's National Auxiliary Convention

The first session of the Woman's National Auxiliary Convention seems to have been in 1936. At this meeting six states were represented as follows: Tennessee, two district conventions; Georgia, two districts; South Carolina, one district; Alabama, one district; North Carolina, four districts composing the state auxiliary convention. . Texas reported twenty local societies but no district or state organization. The approximate number of women engaged in the work was 2,000. They paid \$509.55 for missions, \$425.90 for benevolence, and \$75.00 for education.

In 1937 there were four states representing with eleven districts as follows: Tennessee, two; Georgia, two; South Carolina, one; North Carolina, six districts composing their state auxiliary convention. Approximately 1,200 observed the week of prayer, 273 subscribers were secured for the papers, \$495.18 paid for missions, \$240.64 for education; \$1,285.91 for orphanage work and \$159.21 received for dues.

In 1938 eight states represented with 19 districts and three state organizations: North Carolina State composed of six districts; Tennessee, two; South Carolina, one; Alabama, Texas and Florida, one each. There were 3,069 women engaged in this work in these states. There were 30 stewardship and mission classes held; 19 declamation contests, 87 societies observed the week of prayer, 886 subscribers secured to our papers; \$1,055.04 paid for missions; \$575.39 for education; and \$2,168.89 for orphanage. Eight new districts were received; four were reported as follows: Texas, Florida, Alabama and Missouri. The women's work of Missouri reported a state organization composed of five districts or mission associations. Within these five districts, they reported twenty-two local circles or auxiliaries raising \$446.82 which had been given for home and foreign missions, publishing house and local benevolent needs, and received in dues \$226.40.

A summary of the three year's work follows: Number stewardship and mission study classes, 58; number observing the week of prayer, 4,000; paid for missions, \$2,059.77; paid for education, \$891.03; paid for benevolences, \$825.90; paid for orphanage work, \$3,380.70; paid in dues, \$1,019.31; subscriptions for denominational papers, 1,139; total amount of money raised, \$8,176.91.

The Second Session

The second session of the National Association convened with the East Nashville Church, Nashville, Tennessee, November 15, 1938. After appropriate devotional services, the local pastor, Rev. I. J. Blackwelder, introduced Rev. George Dunbar, Chuckey, Tennessee, who delivered the opening sermon from the subject, "Mountaintop Experiences and the Valley of Human Needs." The message was a source of inspiration to the large congregation assembled. The delegates present represented the eastern association and the western association as per the constitution. The states represented were: Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kentucky and Ohio. Delegates from

Virginia were present and became members of the body later in the session. Fifty-five ministers were listed as in attendance.

The following officers were elected: Rev. James F. Miller, Flat River, Missouri, moderator; Rev. J. R. Davidson, Bryan, Texas, assistant moderator; Rev. E. C. Morris, Elizabeth City, North Carolina, secretary; Rev. Clarence Bowen, Durham, North Carolina, assistant secretary; Rev. F. S. Van Hoose, Paintsville, Kentucky, treasurer. The executive board was composed of Reverends I. J. Blackwelder, M. E. Tyson, Melvin Bingham, M. F. Van Hoose and J. K. Warkentin.

The original plan of composition for the association was dissolved and a new plan set up. In the new plan no regard was paid to the eastern and western associations in the matter of selection of delegates to the National Association, representation to the new body to be by states. Each state association was entitled to five delegates elected from the laity, regardless of the number of local associations; but, in addition to the five delegates, each state was entitled to one delegate for each association within the bounds of the state. All ordained ministers who hold church membership and are in good standing shall have the privilege to represent and to vote. In the plan the association was to meet annually on Tuesday following the second Sunday in July and remain in session until its work was complete. It should meet east of the Mississippi River one year and west of that river the next year.

The work of the Zion Bible School at Blakely, Georgia, was discussed by Rev. T. B. Mellette, its principal; his remarks were followed by further information on the work by Rev. Floyd Cherry, field secretary of the school. A pageant, "The Challenge of the Cross," was rendered by a group of Missouri leaguers, followed by a solo by Rev. Winford Davis.

The league report represented the leaguers as "a group of some 2,500, for the most part spiritually minded and desirous to be used of Christ in and through the church to put the Kingdom of God first in their lives." It said further, "We could report numerous instances where the Free Will Baptist league has sent forth

ministers, field workers, material for foreign fields as well as the filling of important places in the local churches. I can say, with no apology, that the Free Will Baptist denomination is safe for tomorrow with this vast group of leaguers ready to 'carry on.' "

The woman's auxiliary was reported as doing a good work also the past year. At 7:30 Wednesday evening the missionary work of Rev. T. H. Willey and family in Central America was presented in pictures and an offering for foreign missions was taken.

The statistical report for 1937 showed 1,142 churches, 80,344 members and 1,090 ministers. For 1938 it showed 1,143 churches, 82,752 members and 1,095 ministers. The association adjourned to meet at Bryan, Texas, Tuesday evening after the second Sunday in July, 1939.

The Third Session

This gathering took place at Bryan, Texas, July 11, 1939. After the usual devotional services, the first sermon was delivered from Psalm 90:17 by Rev. Melvin Bingham. An earnest sermon was forcefully delivered with vivid illustrations.

Regular business began Wednesday morning with Rev. James F. Miller in the chair as moderator. Delegates from Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia were present and seated. The moderator delivered his message; the annual message of the association was brought by Rev. J. R. Bennett, using the three words, "Come, Tarry, Go." Those present were said to be "profitably entertained."

Reports from the various sections indicate that the past year was a progressive and fruitful year.

League: "In a day when youth is meeting severe criticism and finding a world that is rather disjointed and unfavorable to youth, I am happy to say that a great host of our young people are finding truth and reality in putting the Kingdom of God first; I am proud of the Free Will Baptist leaguers; truly they are a mighty

army, marching as to war. They are preparing themselves for the conflict, ready to carry on when the call for service is made." The number of youths thus arrayed was given as 24,000: 13,000 seniors, 5,000 intermediates and 6,000 juniors.

Woman's Auxiliary: The woman's auxiliary made a good report.

Sunday School: The Sunday school report showed progress.

Foreign Missions: Rev. and Mrs. T. H. Willey were forced to leave Panama in July because of an intolerant government there; they went from Panama to Nicaragua; their salary was continued in the new field.

Miss Barnard's work in India in the foreign mission field was approved; Miss Bessie Yeley was recommended for foreign mission work in Venezuela.

Two Interesting Incidents Related: On Wednesday afternoon Miss Jean Welch of Nashville, Tennessee, delivered a heart-touching challenge in behalf of the youth of our denomination, and a prayer was offered by Rev. George Dunbar in the same connection; the challenge as made, and the prayer offered, so gripped the hearts of all present that it resulted in a great educational rally as many had never seen before. The cash offering that followed amounted to \$284.35, and pledges were made to the amount of \$1,725.00.

Foreign Missions Speaker: Mrs. T. H. Willey, one of our missionaries to Latin America, was presented to the audience for a talk. She related the political, social, and economic conditions in Latin America; she told of the hardships endured by the missionaries and their willingness to suffer for Christ's sake in that respect.

Her message greatly stirred the hearts of the vast audience; at the close of the message Mrs. Barnes was requested to sing "Follow Me"; while she sang, Mrs. Willey asked the chairman of the foreign and home mission boards to stand at the altar while a call was extended to the youth of the congregation; there were 41 who

came forward to dedicate their lives for definite service in the cause of Christ.

The service was one that will be long remembered by all present and will never be forgotten by many. An offering was taken for missions which amounted to \$126.15.

The Fourth Session

On July 15-19, 1940, the fourth annual meeting of the National Association was held with Paintsville Church in Paintsville, Kentucky. Delegates and messengers were present from eleven states and twelve district associations.

The first service was held on Tuesday evening. After proper devotional services, Rev. L. R. Ennis, Goldsboro, North Carolina, preached the first sermon from John 7:37-39, "Rivers of Living Waters." The record says, "This was considered a masterpiece."

The business part of the association began Wednesday morning with the clerk calling the assembly to order and the moderator taking his place as presiding officer in the meeting. The ministers present were enrolled, committees on finance and credentials were appointed, and the delegates then present were seated.

Rev. James F. Miller was re-elected moderator; Rev. J. R. Davidson, vice-moderator; Rev. E. C. Morris, clerk; Rev. Clarence Bowen, statistician.

Reports from three orphanages were made: one each from North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

A Sunday school convention was formed and a standard of efficiency for Free Will Baptist Sunday schools was adopted.

Good preaching by the following ministers at various times was heard and enjoyed by the assembly: Reverends George Dunbar, B. F. Rogers, Clarence Bowen and our missionaries to Central America, Rev. and Mrs. T. H. Willey.

The report of the statistician showed 1,047 churches with a

membership of 132,270; 3,954 received this year; 1,066 ordained ministers.

The fifth annual session of the Woman's Auxiliary Convention was held during this session of the National Association. Eight states were represented. They had three state organizations and twenty-one district conventions.

The Fifth Session

This meeting was held with the Free Will Baptist Church of Drumright, Oklahoma, on July 13-18, 1941. Delegates and representatives from ten states were present: Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas. Missouri and Oklahoma had the biggest representation. The officers serving last year were retained this year.

Executive Secretary: We make the following quotation from the report of the executive secretary, Rev. L. R. Ennis.

"I have traveled approximately 12,000 miles in the interest of the program of the National Association during the past year, spoken 171 times, written extensively to our church papers, taught in the pastors' school of Texas, and assisted Reverends H. M. and Lizzie McAdams on a missionary tour in North Carolina, which included 115 churches. The services rendered have been quite exasperating but delightful."

He said the response to the program was interesting.

Home Missions: We quote the following from Rev. M. L. Hollis in his home missions report.

"I have held three tent meetings in towns where we had no churches; many accepted the Lord as their Saviour, and two new churches have been established." He said he went to Vernon, Alabama, in November and started a meeting without an invitation and with very few people present the first service. Interest increased from day to day until a church of 28 members was organized before the meeting closed; 30 more were added later, and the foundation was laid for a church building. "We have today," he

said, "one of the nicest little church edifices in that town, and only owe the small sum of \$600 on it.

"The next meeting was held in Mantchia, Missouri, with good results; 23 accepted Christ in this meeting.

"This spring I went to Sulligent, Alabama, and conducted a tent meeting. The Spirit of the Lord was manifested in a great way. Great crowds attended each service and many confessed Christ as their Saviour. I spoke of organizing a church the last service of the meeting, should I find enough interest, and 26 came forward at the close, offering themselves for membership in a Free Will Baptist church."

Education: "We are glad to report an ever-growing and increasing enthusiasm and interest in Christian education and training of workers in every phase of our work and in every endeavor and activity of our beloved denomination. The contributions of the past year have not only been encouraging because of the increase in volume, but also because of the various new localities represented."

Woman's Auxiliary: "We have organized work in eight states, four of which have state conventions; there are twenty districts in other states which do not have state conventions. All of these are representing this time with approximately 4,000 women carrying out the plan of work, of prayer, of organization and instruction."

League: "A steady growth of our league organizations is noted throughout the bounds of our denomination. A more unified program of work is being followed and the work is better understood. A constant stream of better trained and more interested youth flows through our denomination as a result."

Sunday School: The first annual session of the Sunday school convention was held this year, July 13, 14. The president, W. E. Coville, says:

"In September, 1940, I visited the Free Will Baptist church at

Lucama, North Carolina, where I assisted in the organization of a state Sunday school convention.

"I was present at Cookeville, Tennessee, in August, 1940, and assisted in organizing a state Sunday school convention.

"I was also present at Niangua, Missouri, in September, 1940, and assisted there in the organization of the Missouri State Sunday School Convention."

Statistics: The statistician reported 1,543 churches with 140,799 members and 1,504 ordained ministers; 3,322 members were received this year; paid evangelists \$6,638.91; paid pastors, \$90,679.13.

The Sixth Session

This meeting was held with the First Free Will Baptist Church at Columbus, Mississippi, commencing on Tuesday evening, July 14, 1942. The introductory sermon was delivered by Rev. F. C. Zinn, Bristow, Oklahoma, on the subject, "United Effort."

The business part of the session began Wednesday morning with the moderator, Rev. James F. Miller, in the chair. Delegates and representatives from thirteen states were present: Wolverine Association from Michigan, and the Mississippi State Association were received into the national body at this time. All the incumbent officers were re-elected for the ensuing year: Rev. James F. Miller as moderator; Rev. J. R. Davidson, assistant moderator; Rev. E. C. Morris, clerk; Rev. L. C. Johnson, assistant clerk; Rev. S. F. Van Hoose, treasurer. Rev. L. R. Ennis was re-elected national executive secretary.

This meeting was well attended, was enthusiastic, very harmonious, and made good progress. The various reports from the different departments of the association indicated considerable activity and that the state of the denomination was fine.

Mrs. H. M. McAdams, who had been serving as home missionary, was elected to the office of promotional and field worker; her salary was doubled.

The body gave a rising vote of thanks to Rev. J. R. Davidson for his untiring and sacrificial service as chairman and treasurer of the National Board of Education, and he was asked to lead them in a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God for this victory.

Publications and Literature: The constitution was amended so as to provide for a committee on publication and literature to promote the interest of the National Association and its subordinate organizations, as applied to the publication of essential literature for the general advancement of the denomination.

Unified Program: The National Association adopted, at its meeting in 1941, what was called the Unified Program Fund and was supposed to be operating upon this fund. In order that the reader may have a better understanding of this fund, I make the following quotation from recommendations by the general board:

“Christian unity is the equitable support of missions, education and benevolence besought through the establishment of a unified program fund, and that all subordinate organizations, standing boards, officers, field workers and ministers of the denomination be and are hereby called upon to promote, patronize and donate to this fund. It shall be allocated to the objects supported by the association as the body may be pleased to direct in its annual sessions.”

The association directed that it should be allocated upon the following basis: 10% to superannuation; 20% to home missions; 30% to foreign missions; and 40% to education.

Woman's Auxiliary: The Woman's National Auxiliary Convention held its regular annual meeting July 13, 1942. This organization is playing a splendid part in the work of the National Association in its help for the orphanages and missions and the intellectual and spiritual momentum which it contributes to the various parts of the institution. They report 2,664 members this year. They contributed \$6,117.30 to the various departments of the association.

Sunday School: The National Sunday School Convention held its second annual meeting July 12, 13 of this year. It reported state Sunday school conventions in North Carolina, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Missouri, West Virginia, Kentucky and Georgia.

Foreign Missions: The Willeys, who had been doing mission work in Central America had been sent to do mission work in Cuba. Mrs. Willey, who was present, reported that the work was getting off to an amazing start.

The foreign mission work in India was not doing too well in some parts. The Indian helper, Mrs. Mary Kanaka, had died in December of 1941, causing the work in Kotagiri great loss.

Recognition was given to the very faithful and unstinted service rendered by the Rev. H. M. Clay of Kotagiri, South India, in receiving and disbursing funds for our work there and assuming the responsibility of supervising the work generally. It was recommended that a letter of appreciation be sent to Brother Clay for his generous service.

Education: The educational board reported that it had purchased property for a Bible college for \$15,000; and through the generosity of Mr. W. O. Tirrill of Nashville, Tennessee, and donations by friends of the undertaking, had made a down payment of \$5,000 on the property; the board had arranged, according to the specified instructions recorded in the 1941 National Association minutes, for the payment of the remaining \$10,000. They stated that the Lord had directed in a marvelous way, and they felt certain they would be able to pay the balance in full at the time the first payment became due on the balance. They said that so far as the board was concerned, they were ready to open the Bible school this fall.

Based upon this report, the body passed a motion that the board of education be authorized to proceed with all plans to open the Bible school at Nashville, Tennessee, on September 15, 1942.

Executive Secretary: The executive secretary, Rev. L. R. Ennis, made the following report:

"Since the National Association convened in Paintsville, Kentucky, two years ago, Free Will Baptists have witnessed some of the perils and blessings of general church organization. That these perils have cost us greatly in time, money and progress no one will deny; but they have also brought their forbidden blessings. As a Christian denomination, there is evidence of a deeper national consciousness now than has been known before to our generation. The spirit of good will and Christian fraternity has spread extensively among us in recent months; and again, we have been compelled to conclude that the wind that sways the tree promotes its growth.

"Immediately following the 1941 session of the association, a new institution was inaugurated for the advancement of our great cause—the Christian Workers' Institute. For many years Free Will Baptists have realized the need of a medium of fellowship, education and inspiration that would go beyond the possibilities of our great associational meetings. It is an accepted fact among those who have attended the Christian Workers' Institute that it is the answer to this need. During the year four sessions have been conducted at strategic points: namely, Monett, Missouri; Erwin, Tennessee; Flat River, Missouri; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. There have been 163 students from nine states enrolled in these sessions, and 91 certificates awarded. Gifts from the faculty, students and visitors of the institute to our national work amounted to \$576.18 for the year, and the salaries and expenses paid by the national board of education totaled \$783.15. It should be understood, however, that the salaries of the executive secretary and our missionary, Miss Barnard, are not included in this gross expense account. Undoubtedly the Christian Workers' Institute is one of the greatest unifying agencies among us. We need it. Let us keep it running."

Statistics: The statistician reported 2,283 churches with 144,-

023 members and 1,342 ordained ministers; 4,535 members had been received this year.

The Seventh Session

The National Association met on July 11-16, 1943, with the East Nashville Church, Nashville, Tennessee. Delegates and representatives from fourteen states were present; Alabama had the largest representation.

Dr. Bob Jones, founder of the Bob Jones College, Cleveland, Tennessee, delivered the first sermon from the subject, "Evangelism and Character Building." The message was said to be highly instructive and interspersed with wit and humor. The officers of the association the preceding year were retained for the coming year. The moderator delivered his message and an adjournment was taken till Wednesday morning.

Bible College: The first item of historical interest was a report of Free Will Baptist Bible College, made by its business manager, Rev. J. R. Davidson; after some discussion of and praise for the work, the report was adopted. Then the college president, Rev. L. C. Johnson, delivered a timely address on the subject, "Ye Shall Know the Truth."

We quote the following statements from the business manager's report concerning the Bible College: "I have seen a young cause, which is dearer to my heart than gold, flourish and grow beyond my fond expectations. When asked before the opening for the year, I said, 'I shall consider it a success if twelve to fifteen are enrolled.' The records show that eighteen were enrolled.

"When asked what I thought of its financial support, I said, 'The last thing we shall do is to borrow funds with which to operate.' A steady increase in cash balance has been realized since the retirement of the indebtedness on the college property on October 13, 1942."

The associational sermon was next delivered by the executive

secretary, Rev. L. R. Ennis, from Hebrews 6:1-3; subject, "Let Us Go On . . . This We Will Do if God Permit."

Home Missions: From the report of the promotional field secretary, Rev. Mrs. H. M. McAdams, we quote: "Like Paul of old I had a great leading to go back over the field and visit the churches to see how they were coming along. In a few places I found discouragement had crept in; but when they learned of others that were going on, it brought new life into them and they were set going again with new courage to make the goal."

She said she had worked in seven states, visited 132 churches, witnessed 315 conversions, organized 19 auxiliaries, and taken 17 subscriptions to our church paper.

Executive Secretary: The executive secretary, Rev. L. R. Ennis, made the following report:

"Another year of delightful history has been written by Free Will Baptists of the United States. Surely the Lord is among us and we know it; let every heart be glad. A unity of experience, faith and method is proclaiming victories of eternal significance.

"The Unified Program Fund is now an established financial system. Its gains for the past year justify the wisdom of its inauguration. There has been a total of \$3,841.44 received and \$2,972.50 allocated to the respective boards during the year. This system is a growing revelation of the co-operative ability of Free Will Baptists.

"The Bible College and foreign missions reveal a trend in the thinking of our people. Trained Christian workers who see the whole world as their field of labor is our grand objective. The school and the mission field should be inseparable. The receipts of the college show a total of \$18,139.03 since the first of last July and the foreign mission treasury a total of \$8,769.71. We should be reverently thankful.

"Seven sessions of the Christian Workers' Institute have been held in five states of the National Association since our last national meeting. An enrollment of 185, with 135 receiving certificates or

diplomas, attending these sessions as registered students. In addition to 420 hours spent in class work, evangelistic services were held, promotional itineraries and rallies conducted and general meetings attended."

Sunday School: The Sunday School Convention held its third annual session July 11, 12, 1943. They reported a fair attendance and good interest manifested during the meeting.

League: "No department or phase of our work has suffered the inroads during the past year as has the work of the Free Will Baptist league. This has been due to the drafting of virtually all of the senior-age boys into the armed forces of the nation, and the shifting of much of the youthful population in defense work. However, this is not intended as a pessimistic note, but rather a statement of fact. The work of the Free Will Baptist league continues to move forward among the junior, intermediate and adult groups; with a fair maintenance of the work in the senior leagues."

Foreign Missions: A constitution and bylaws to govern the foreign mission board was adopted.

On Wednesday evening Rev. T. H. Willey, missionary to Cuba, made a report of the work in that island. The record says, "He brought greetings from our churches and brethren in Cuba. The message imparted information which was perhaps the most encouraging of any missionary report yet given to this body."

The report showed five churches, six native preachers, one Bible woman, and thirty-four preaching points aside from the churches, sixty benches furnished at these various preaching points, baptized 76 believers, had more than 200 probationers awaiting baptism, and 15 prospective students in training for Christian service. A motion which provided authority for \$5,000 to establish a Bible school in Cuba was passed.

During the month of February the board sponsored a tour of the work in Cuba by Rev. Henry Melvin, during which time he assisted Rev. and Mrs. Willey in organizing the work there. On

February 14, the first association of Free Will Baptists was organized on the island of Cuba; it is known as the Pinar del Rio Association. The report on Cuba closed by saying, "May the Lord indeed be praised for the wonderful progress being made in Cuba."

The work in India was not progressing so well as in Cuba, due in part at least to the absence of Miss Laura Belle Barnard from the work there because of conditions brought on by World War II. Rev. H. M. Clay was still looking after the mission work in Kotagiri in South India for the board in the absence of Miss Barnard. Rev. Alexander Banks, a former acquaintance of Miss Barnard, was caring for the work in Purnea, in part at least, until conditions grew more favorable to the work there.

The Eighth Session

On July 9-14, 1944, the National Association met in Flat River, Missouri, in the Free Will Baptist Church there. Delegates and representatives from twelve states and five district associations were present. Rev. F. A. Rivenbark, Durham, North Carolina, delivered the opening address from the subject, "Victory Through Faith!" Rev. J. R. Davidson was elected moderator; Rev. Raymond Riggs, assistant moderator; Rev. E. C. Morris, clerk; Rev. R. C. Wiggs, assistant clerk and Rev. F. S. Van Hoose, treasurer. Rev. Rashie Kennedy was chosen statistician.

A rising vote of thanks was given Rev. James F. Miller for the faithful and untiring service rendered as moderator for the last seven years.

Both publishing houses, the one at Ayden, North Carolina, and the one at Monett, Missouri, were reported in a good and prosperous condition, by the committee on publication and literature.

Sunday School: The National Sunday School Convention met in its regular annual session July 10, 1943, at Flat River, Missouri, and reviewed its work of the year before and formed plans for the new year coming.

Woman's Auxiliary: The Woman's National Auxiliary Convention met July 10, during the National Association. They had an interesting and progressive meeting. They had reports from nine states; active members 3,229. They have received \$2,472 and spent \$2,356.85.

League: The Free Will Baptist league continued to show a normal growth in practically every state and among all age groups except in the senior group as mentioned in report of last year. Several state organizations and many district organizations were serving very efficiently throughout the bounds of our work.

Bible College: The report of the business manager of the college says that, "The interest in the college was still growing with our people; that fact is verified by the cash balance in the support of that institution having constantly grown, notwithstanding our operating expenses have been much heavier than during the previous year of our history. Our cash balance increased over the year before by approximately 200%. For this we humbly thank the One who is our victory."

Thirty-four students were enrolled the past year and four graduated in a two-year course May 30, 1944. He says the prospects for the future are still better, that there was a strong demand for third and fourth year college work. He reports that they had received from all sources from July 1, 1943, to June 30, 1944, a total of \$21,756.51; that they had disbursed for all purposes \$17,238.17, leaving a balance of \$4,517.74 this year which, when added to the balance on hand, gives a balance of \$6,924.62; and the college is free from indebtedness.

Superannuation: The superannuation board came forward with a good plan; the executive secretary said they had a plan that was working. The 1943-44 report showed a 300% increase over any other previous year. "Thank God," he says, "for that achievement."

Home Missions: The home mission board, in its report, showed a nice increase for the past year; \$1,024.97 last year as compared with \$708.17 the year before.

Executive Secretary: The unified program showed great gains the past year—a gain of 60% over the year before. He said, “This is another sign of co-operation in our ranks.”

Four sessions of the Christian Workers’ Institute were held in this past year with an enrollment of 151, and 80 received certificates. Along with the institute were held evangelistic services, promotional services, rallies and general meetings; 34 were saved and reclaimed during the institutes. The field worker reported that a new orphanage was to be opened in Kentucky in July, free from indebtedness. The work in Ohio and Virginia was said to be moving nicely.

Foreign Missions: The report on this subject says: “The associational year 1943-44 has been another great year for the foreign mission department of our denomination. Interest in the work has increased greatly throughout the various states which comprise the national body. This is shown first by the gratifying increase in receipts, and then by the supplementary matter of correspondence, inquiries and expressions of good will concerning the work which all go to make up a very pleasing picture.

The receipts this past year were nearly double that received for foreign missions in any previous year. Several of the states gave considerably more than their suggested quota which was assigned them a year ago. For this the denomination is thankful to Almighty God and those who gave freely.

The \$5,000 campaign launched a year ago for the purpose of establishing a mission center in Cuba went forward in a very acceptable manner. Of the amount \$3,000 was spent for that purpose; along with that went funds to the amount of \$1,750 for operating expenses of the school.

A nice tract of land was bought for \$800—eighteen acres in the tract. On this, suitable buildings had been and were being erected to conduct a mission school. And the school of missions formally opened the first time January 4, 1944, with seven students.

Rafel Josue, who was put at the head of the school, was said to

be capable in every way of conducting such a school; it was said that they were very fortunate in securing his services. His wife was also a very capable teacher. Twenty students were in prospect for the opening this coming September. The five organized churches in Cuba had a membership of 100, with seven deacons, seven Sunday schools and three chapels. Besides the prospective pastors in the student group, they had three settled native pastors—Pedro Rojo, Pedro Oliva and Santiago Delgado. Miss Yeley was also a settled pastor. They had quite a lot of livestock and poultry on the farm, and all they had was paid for.

The district territory they were covering at that time was about 120 miles long by about 50 miles wide; it lay diagonally across the province of Pinar del Rio.

The situation concerning the work in India was practically the same, and almost unchanged, as of a year ago. Due to the grim realities of war, Miss Barnard was yet restricted from re-entering the field in India. The Rev. H. M. Clay who had been looking after the work in Kotagiri, South India, passed away during the year, and Miss Elizabeth Coyle took over in his place.

The Ninth Session

On July 9-12, 1945, the representatives of the many state and local associations gathered at the city of Middlesex, North Carolina, with the Free Will Baptist Orphanage. The introductory sermon was delivered by Rev. John L. Welch of Nashville, Tennessee, from Mark 1:30. The same brethren were retained for moderator and clerk. Rev. J. L. Welch was chosen assistant moderator, and Rev. Floyd B. Cherry assistant clerk. Eighteen states were represented, the Florida State Association being received at this time.

Executive Secretary: By reference to the report of the national executive secretary, we learn that the unified program has made progress this year, \$6,614.24 having been collected and \$6,594.50 having been allocated to the respective boards. This is a 25% increase over last year.

Home Missions: Growth was noticeable too, in the department of home missions. Total receipts for that year were \$1,432.47; they spent \$1,166.32, and had a balance of \$1,164.38 in the treasury.

Sunday School: The Sunday School Convention failed to meet in 1945; the meeting was called off by the president because of the emergency of World War II.

Woman's Auxiliary: The woman's auxiliary had shown marked increase. In 1944 they received \$2,472. In 1945 they had received \$8,158.61, which was over 300% increase. They said the praise was due to the noble women for following the leadership of the Lord. Mrs. Eunice Edwards, president of the Woman's National Auxiliary Convention, and Mrs. Fannie Polston reported the activities of the auxiliary to the national body.

Bible College: In 1944 the Bible College board stated they were left without a staff of workers in the college; they secured the services of Rev. L. R. Ennis as acting president of the college, and through his persistent efforts and that of the treasurer-business manager, the services of Mrs. Lille Herring, were secured as household supervisor and dietitian; Mrs. J. L. Welch, secretary; Miss Laura Belle Barnard and Rev. J. P. Barrow, instructors. And when, at the end of the first semester, Miss Barnard was granted passage to India, Rev. Ralph Lightsey took her place for the second semester.

The 1945-46 bulletin shows an enrollment of 31 during the school year 1944-45, 12 of whom received diplomas or certificates on June 7, 1945. Prospects for enrollment this coming fall (1945) were very good, such that would fairly well tax the facilities of the college.

"The Lord has marvelously blessed our institution in material support through the liberalities of a small percentage of Free Will Baptists in the states, in dollars and cents, to the extent that our financial report for 1945 exceeds that for 1944 by approximately \$2,750."

The National Association at this meeting passed resolutions

providing for the incorporation and expansion of the Bible College.

Foreign Missions: The report on foreign missions said, "We come to the close of this past associational year clearly recognizing a marked increase in foreign mission interest among the Free Will Baptists of the United States. It is indeed gratifying to notice that each year we reach a new high in financial receipts as well as in many other manifestations of interest. The total receipts for the year have amounted to the sum of \$22,112.95. Adding to this the amount brought forward which was \$3,111.84, and we have a grand total of \$25,224.79; this is an increase of about \$8,000 over any previous year. May the Lord be praised for the opening of the hearts of the people to the worthy cause of carrying the gospel to other lands."

A foreign mission office was set up at Monett, Missouri, during this past year, from which the board kept in touch with all our foreign mission activity.

Another thing for which the board was praising the Lord was that Miss Barnard had been permitted to return to the field in India. She had been waiting for several years for this permission. It was thought that the work there would move along better after her return.

All the work in Cuba was reported to be moving along nicely, both at the school of missions and over the field as a whole. This is a field that is responding nicely to the worthy efforts being put forth for its uplifting. The board recommended a vacation of three months for the missionaries to alternate among the missionaries in such a manner as the work would not suffer. They doubtless needed the vacation after three years' continuous service.

Rev. Kenneth Turner had been employed by the board during the past year with his motion picture equipment in the interest of the missionary program. This, with the itinerant work put forth by the chairman-treasurer of the board, carried the program into many places and even states that had not manifested any interest in foreign mission work before.

Reverends Raymond Riggs of Highland Park, Michigan, and R. C. Wiggs of Ayden, North Carolina, made a visit to the field in Cuba during the month of March, 1945, under the auspices of the foreign mission board. Their visit to the field was helpful and added interest in the Cuban field on the part of the people here at home.

The Tenth Session

Ministers, deacons and messengers constituting the tenth meeting of the National Association convened with the Central Avenue Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 17, 1946. After proper devotional services, the first message of the meeting was delivered by Rev. C. B. Thompson, state missionary of Texas, from Acts 26:19.

The representatives coming from sixteen states were properly seated; Rev. L. C. Johnson was chosen moderator and the regular routine business of the meeting began moving along. Quite a lot of routine business was transacted during the session, but very little of historical value.

The attendance at the various sessions of the meeting was good and interest fine; the business of the session was transacted in peace and harmony.

Reports coming in from various territories and activities of the national body indicated that the denomination had enjoyed a good degree of prosperity the past year.

The unified program brought in nearly \$8,000, and was allocated to the different departments for which it was designed.

Bible College: Business was suspended Wednesday afternoon and the meeting turned over to those in charge of the special educational program for the evening. Rev. Henry Melvin, chairman of the board of trustees of the Bible College, presided over this phase of the evening session. He first gave a summary of the Bible College history which was followed by a report from Rev. J. R. Davidson, business manager of the college, of the finan-

cial standing during the past fiscal year. He reported that the increase in enrollment during the college year, 1945-46, made it necessary for those responsible for the direction of the college to take on added financial responsibilities. It became necessary to invest several thousand dollars in additional property and equipment; hence we have realized quite an increase in cost of operation.

The administration building was purchased for \$15,000, and the Sword building, purchased in October, 1945, cost \$10,000. The increase in the value of the buildings bought and the equipment in use, including the library, would run our assets up to a value of near \$50,000. "How marvelous the achievements in every way, and only four years of history behind us! Our God be praised for it all."

Foreign Missions: Wednesday evening being the missionary service, the congregation was led in a lively song and praise service by Rev. Raymond Riggs, a member of the foreign mission board, after which Rev. T. H. Willey, superintendent of Cuban missions, took charge. He gave a report of what the missionaries are doing in Cuba. Then Rev. Kenneth Turner showed pictures of the Cuban work.

Mrs. T. H. Willey brought a gospel message which was delivered in much earnestness. The message was convincing and inspiring; this was revealed by the fact that many young Christians came to an altar of consecration and dedicated their lives to a definite Christian service. At the close of the service an offering was taken for foreign missions which amounted to \$315.25.

The foreign mission board is now duly incorporated under the laws of Tennessee, and is now in a position to legally acquire property for the denomination in any country. The school was blessed with twenty-two students the past year. We now have a work in three of the six provinces of Cuba.

"Our school of missions in India, located near Kotagiri, is making marked progress," the report says. "It has climbed from a stu-

dent body of ten and twenty to a number now consisting of forty or fifty. There is a shortage of workers in India."

The Eleventh Session

The eleventh meeting of the National Association convened with the Highland Park Church in Detroit, Michigan, beginning July 15, 1947. Rev. Edgil Howard, the associate pastor of the host church, gave the welcome address, followed by a response by Rev. F. S. Van Hoose. After this, those present were entertained and edified by Rev. M. L. Sutton who delivered the introductory sermon on the subject, "Weights of Sin."

The business part of the meeting began Wednesday morning with Rev. L. C. Johnson in the chair as moderator. Delegates were present from sixteen states and a large number of ministers were in attendance.

The several reports coming in from the various activities of the national body indicated that the past year had been a successful one.

Excutive Secretary: He says, "There is greater love for God and one another expressed now throughout our denomination." Statistics as reported by him are: Associations, 170; churches in the states, 3,467; church members, 255,127; ordained ministers, 2,461; licensed ministers, 362; Sunday schools, 72,684; leagues, 692; enrollment of leaguers, 3,236; woman's auxiliaries, 483; prayer meetings, 1,591.

Bible College: Rev. L. C. Johnson was called back to the presidency of the Bible College, and Rev. Henry Melvin was elected as business manager for the school. Rev. J. R. Davidson filed his report as retiring business manager of the Bible College, and because of his faithful service in that capacity, we quote a portion of that report:

"This will be my final report of the financial standing of our educational program to the National Association of Free Will Baptists. For nine consecutive years it has been my responsibility

and privilege to keep this information before the people. Permit me to express my thanks to all who have lent a helping hand in steering this cause around the rocks and into safe channels financially during the time in which I have labored from June, 1938, to the present. . . . May God's richest blessings be upon this little institution, and may the Holy Spirit steer it clear of liberalism, atheism, so-called modernism, and economic wrecklessness as it moves on into expanded fields of service."

Foreign Missions: The Wednesday evening session was all given over to the subject of foreign missions. Rev. Raymond Riggs, chairman of that board, had charge of the services. Rev. T. H. Wiley and Miss Bessie Ycley were present from the Cuban field and both brought helpful and inspiring messages concerning that field. Rev. Kenneth Turner showed some picture slides which he recently made in Cuba and which were enjoyed very much by the audience. An offering was taken for foreign missions amounting to \$291.80.

It was noted in the report that the interest in foreign missions was growing larger each year. Two new missionaries were sent to the India field the past year, Rev. and Mrs. Paul Woolsey. They state further, "A few years ago they were searching diligently for missionaries that could be sent to foreign fields, but now we have more applicants than we have money with which to send them."

The work seemed to be moving forward in the Cuban field with the blessing of heaven. "We now have ten organized churches in the Pinar Association of Free Will Baptists, and approximately forty preaching stations. Some of these stations are practically ready for formation into churches. The work at the school has progressed nicely through the past school term. We had thirty-two in school this term."

The work in India was said to be progressing nicely: we have already mentioned the sending of Rev. and Mrs. Woolsey to that field; it was said that he took over \$2,000 worth of equipment with

him, and that he made a favorable report of the work being done there after his arrival.

Tribute was paid Mr. Turner concerning his itinerant work in connection with raising funds and promoting the interest in foreign missions. He worked 327 days in twelve different states and turned \$2,284.14 into the treasury.

The Twelfth Session

The ministers, deacons and messengers from the many churches forming the National Association of Free Will Baptists met with the church at Pocahontas, Arkansas, July 13-15, 1948.

This session was opened as usual with a prayer and praise service, led this time by Rev. Damon C. Dodd; a period of devotional services was led by Rev. Paul Long, after which they proceeded to regular business with Rev. L. C. Johnson in the chair.

Ministers and messengers were present from seventeen states; a goodly number of ministers were in attendance from each state.

The reports made indicated a healthy condition in the churches as well as in all of the several activities of the National Association.

Home Missions: This board took on a new impetus and began to look out on the various fields in which it should be operating. The formation of 16 new churches was reported, and it challenged the national body to supply them with the necessary funds to enable them to answer the many Macedonian cries for help.

Bible College: Thursday evening was devoted to promotion of the Bible College. The business manager of the college was in charge of it, and a splendid program was rendered, climaxed with a move to expand the college and to move it to a new location. At the close of this rally, pledges and offerings were made amounting to \$5,000.

Foreign Missions: The Wednesday evening session was in charge of the foreign mission board; its chairman, Rev. Raymond

Riggs, conducted the program. A good program was rendered and the report of the board read and adopted. Mr. Riggs gave an account of the first graduating exercises of the School of Missions in Cuba. Miss Bessie Yeley and Mrs. Willey made interesting talks on the mission in Cuba. They reported that a dormitory for girls was completed there.

The report on foreign missions said: "The past year has been an unprecedented year in the history of our foreign missionary program."

The contributions had reached a new all-time high; the plan to elect or appoint a mission director in each state had worked well this past year.

Three persons were appointed as missionaries to India: Rev. and Mrs. Dan Cronk, and Miss Zalene Lloyd. Miss Laura Belle Barnard was elected director of all Free Will Baptist work in India.

Statistics as follows were given: Number of local associations or conferences, 196; number of churches, 3,822; number of members, 273,366; number of ordained ministers, 3,238; number of licensed ministers, 492; number of Sunday schools, 114,735; number of leagues, 2,108; league enrollment, 13,276; number of auxiliaries, 803; number of their enrollment, 8,371; number of prayer meetings reported, 2,283. By comparing this with that given in 1947, the reader will see that this year has been one of considerable progress.

The Thirteenth Session

The ministers, deacons and messengers from the several local associations and conferences met in the Arts Building, Columbus, Georgia, for the National Association on July 12-14, 1949; these fine people came from 17 different states and Cuba. After spending thirty minutes in a spirited devotional service conducted by Rev. E. C. Morris, the body entered into a short business session with Rev. F. B. Cherry presiding. Following this, the moderator

delivered his keynote address from the subject, "Christ Is the Answer."

Beginning Wednesday morning at nine o'clock, the delegation entered into a series of sessions of business, interspersed with preaching at proper intervals. The ministers delivering messages during the various sessions were: F. B. Cherry, J. R. Davidson, Benito Rodriguez, Damon C. Dodd and Edgil Howard.

Sunday School: The National Sunday School Convention met at Glennville, Georgia, August 10-12, 1948. Dr. Clarence H. Benson, executive secretary of the Evangelical Teacher Training Association, was guest speaker. Considerable interest was manifested at this meeting.

League: One of the principal accomplishments of the board was the Nation-Wide League Conference held June 14-16 in Tulsa, Oklahoma; the actual registration was 564, and it was estimated that nearly 150 did not register. It was also stated that the offerings sent to the board for the past year had doubled.

Foreign Missions: The report says, "New strides have been made during the past year, new victories won and the blessings of the Lord upon the work have been in evidence continually." It was stated that a definite field was assigned to Free Will Baptists in India and that we then had four missionaries located within the territory assigned, opening up the field: Rev. and Mrs. Dan Cronk and Rev. and Mrs. Paul Woolsey.

Miss Laura Belle Barnard is yet at Kotagiri; the four mentioned above are located in the Purnea District. Miss Zalene Lloyd is in language school.

"In Cuba the work continues to go forward with great blessing. The school is progressing nicely, having graduated another class this spring; a boys' dormitory is now being erected on the school farm. New fields are being opened over the western province of Pinar del Rio, and the revival spirit continues to abound."

Thus another annual meeting of our National Association has been held in peace and harmony, and its sessions open up to view

an honest, sincere body of religious people fighting hard against the hosts of sin and being at least partly successful, they are moving on to victory.

The Fourteenth Session

The representatives of the many state and local associations composing the National Association gathered at Richmond, California, July 11-13, 1950. The Tuesday evening service began with singing led by Mr. I. L. Stanley, followed by a devotional service conducted by Rev. Dean Moore.

This was followed by a short session of routine business with the moderator, Rev. N. Bruce Barrow, in the chair. After the address of welcome by Rev. George McLain, pastor of the host church, and "a beautiful rendition of the song 'Victory in Jesus,'" the keynote address was delivered by the moderator using 1 Peter 4:10 for a text.

The body met again Wednesday morning for regular business and other needed services. There was a shortage of delegates at this meeting, only thirteen states were represented in the delegation. This shortage was caused by the place of meeting being so far to one side. However it seems that there were reports from the local organizations from seventeen states.

This annual meeting went forward, it seems, in peace and harmony, and considerable business was transacted that was profitable to the movement. The fact that it was held in the far west was an advantage to our cause in this territory.

Sunday School: The Sunday School Convention met at Bryan, Texas, August 16-18, 1949, and the following report was made: "It was the best yet, and the program of inspiration and information was enjoyed by those present."

League: Rev. Henry Melvin gave a glowing report of the Nation-Wide Free Will Baptist League Conference held at Norfolk, Virginia, June 13-15, 1950. He challenged the National Associa-

tion as the parent organization to give our youth a place in the vineyard of the Lord.

Woman's Auxiliary: When it comes to the performance of religious service, there is no other section of the National Association that equals the auxiliary in comparison to its membership. The number of auxiliaries was 184; their membership 3,470.

Bible College: The Bible College has completed eight years of successful history, having registered in the past scholastic year seventy-six students from fifteen states and Cuba. Scores of her graduates are serving in pastorates, Sunday schools, woman's missionary societies and daily Bible schools here in the homeland, while five are in active service in foreign lands.

It opened in September as a four-year Bible college, offering the A. B. degree in Biblical education. This report is encouraging to the friends of the Bible school.

Foreign Missions: The report says, "God has wonderfully blessed in our foreign missions department during another year. . . . The work in both India and Cuba is going forward with great blessing." We have great open doors and our workers are moving into them as fast as our people will make it possible. The department received \$46,005.52, and paid out \$45,361.04 this year.

The Fifteenth Session

The fifteenth meeting of the National Association convened at the Bible College auditorium, July 10-12, 1951. After a devotional service the clerk called the moderator, Rev. N. Bruce Barrow, to the chair; and another short business session took place.

Rev. F. B. Cherry delivered the keynote message using Ezekiel 16:49 as a text.

The regular routine of business began on Wednesday morning at nine o'clock. Representatives were present from eighteen states; the attendance of ministers was large and everyone felt sure of a successful meeting.

The several reports which came in of the various activities of the national body indicated that the past year had been a successful one.

This annual session went through also in peace and harmony, as nearly so at least as is common for such meetings, and much was done to advance the cause which the National Association stood for.

The reports will reflect the status as well as the progress of the movement as a whole during the past year.

Executive Secretary: He says that "This spirit of denominational revival has resulted in the best year we have ever known as a National Association; . . . There are many goals toward which we have been striving that yet remain out of reach." He says that "eleven sessions of Christian Workers' Institute have been held with a total enrollment of 400. Of this number 49 were ministers, 125 were Sunday school teachers and officers." He says further that 60 churches have been formed in the last two years.

Sunday School: The Sunday school board has taken the place of the Sunday school convention, and the board reports progress.

Woman's Auxiliary: The auxiliary reports 337 organizations with a membership of 6,123; thus nearly doubling their number of organizations and their membership. Their total offerings for the year were \$48,093.52.

League: The leaguers met in another nation-wide conference on the Bible College campus July 3-5. They report that there were 800 in attendance. A deep spirit of consecration was said to prevail, culminating in 100 dedications and conversions. Messages by the young ministers were said to have been the highlights of the meeting. The music of the conference was said to have been superb.

Bible College: The Bible College closed its ninth year on May 25, 1951. Three significant events marked the year as outstanding—an all-time high in enrollment, 104 from 17 states, and the graduation of the first four-year class composed of four men and one

woman, upon whom were conferred the B. A. degree with a major in Bible. The third event was the erection of Memorial Auditorium in which these sessions of our national meetings were held. The total cost of the building at that time was \$27,852.39.

Foreign Missions: Since November 1, 1950, Rev. Raymond Riggs has been secretary-treasurer of the board and serving as promotional secretary.

Miss Barnard, who had been in the states on vacation, returned to India; Miss Volena Wilson, having been appointed missionary to India, crossed the waters with Miss Barnard. Progress was reported in North India with several converts and baptisms.

The work in Cuba continues to grow. Brother Willey reports a wonderful year in the school. Plans are under way by the association of Free Will Baptists in Cuba to underwrite the support of future native workers.

We have a very fine missionary in Africa, working under the South African General Mission, in the person of Mrs. Harold Stevens; some very fine reports have come in concerning her work.

The Sixteenth Session

When the time came for the meeting of another National Association, representatives from the local associations from eighteen states were found on their way to Shawnee, Oklahoma; ministers and messengers gathered in the Municipal Auditorium July 15-17, 1952.

Rev. E. E. Morris presided over the meeting, and Rev. Paul J. Kettelman recorded the proceedings. Rev. J. R. Davidson delivered the keynote message. The business of the entire session, it seems, was carried on in peace and harmony.

Dr. R. L. Decker, executive director of the National Association of Evangelicals was present and addressed the association briefly on the relationship of the two associations.

Rev. Ollie Latch of Poplar Bluff, Missouri, and Rev. W. N.

Gibson of Evansville, Indiana, were recognized as representatives from the General Baptists; a rising vote of appreciation was given them for their presence as such.

Rev. Paul Woolsey, returned missionary from India, was present and made a report on the mission work in that country.

By a study of these reports the reader will be able to ascertain the state of religion in the denomination and the progress being made.

Sunday School: The Sunday School Convention had held its tenth annual meeting, and it reported the best yet held.

Woman's Auxiliary: The Woman's National Auxiliary Convention reported 399 organizations with a membership of 8,844; the increase in members this year was 898; that they had received in offerings the past year \$11,124.75; and had paid out to the various activities of the association, \$9,198.51.

League: The league board reported funds collected in the amount of \$1,685.71. The leaguers had paid out to various activities of the National Association, \$1,664.36. The membership was not given. It had maintained a national office with Rev. C. F. Bowen in charge, and had sponsored its Fifth Nation-Wide Conference. It had also launched a monthly league paper.

Foreign Missions: This report shows that the new territory taken over in North India is a subdivision about 40 miles wide by 70 miles long and has a half-million population. It is stated that Rev. and Mrs. Cronk are laboring in this territory and doing a wonderful work. They had received a new jeep to be used in the work.

Miss Barnard and Miss Wilson are in Kotagiri. A Free Will Baptist church was recently organized in this district of 14 members. A Chevrolet car has been received for use in missionary work by these parties. The report says, "In spite of the government shake up in Cuba, and pressure groups, the Lord is still blessing Cuba. Another class of graduates has gone out from the Bible school in Cuba." Mr. Willey wrote, "We closed, Sun-

day night, the most wonderful convention we have had thus far." They had two International Youth for Christ workers on the program. They also had "a very fine Methodist Cuban minister" who gave the graduation address. Miss Bessie Yeley was forced to return to the states and Rev. and Mrs. Robert Wilfong were released at their request.

Mrs. Harold Stevens continues to serve in Africa, under the South African General Mission; she is still reported as "doing a wonderful work."

The Seventeenth Session

The seventeenth session of the National Association was held in the Mt. Vernon, Illinois, Township Auditorium, July 14-16, 1953. Praise service was conducted by Mr. I. L. Stanley, and devotional services by Rev. George Waggoner who read from Philippians 3:10 and 4:4-8.

The clerk of the association, Rev. Paul Ketteman, called the house to order and introduced the assistant moderator, Rev. Joseph Ange, as presiding officer. A welcome address was given by Rev. George W. Wagoner, in the name of Illinois Free Will Baptists, and he introduced the Honorable O. R. Buford, major of Mt. Vernon, who extended the welcome on behalf of the town.

The Bible College quartet rendered two numbers—"You Hold the Keys" and "He's a Saviour to Be Proud Of." The moderator brought the keynote address using the expression, "Enlarging and Expanding."

In the 18 statistical reports from the different states, the church membership in five states had decreased and in thirteen states had increased; the five states referred to were Florida, Missouri, Ohio, South Carolina and Virginia.

Progress was indicated in the reports of all the various activities; but the reports are made in such general terms that it is difficult for the historian to get much definite information from them.

Sunday School: The Sunday school board added a promotional secretary for the Sunday school work this year.

Woman's Auxiliary: The Woman's National Auxiliary Convention reports a decrease in membership in 1953, but their offerings were reported as \$11,719.79; their disbursements were \$11,368.65.

Bible College: The bulletin for July, 1953, makes the following report: "The registration reached an all-time high of 170; a new building was purchased with \$26,000 paid on it; largest class in history of the school was graduated; a correspondence department was opened; an extension school was set up; regular income for operating purposes passed \$100,000 for the first time.

League: "The National League Board has enjoyed a profitable and successful year of activities. We have seen growth on every hand. Many new leagues and district conventions have been organized; and, in general, we have every reason to rejoice in the leadership of the Lord."

Home Missions: The board reports: "The Lord has used the home mission board in helping establish 17 new Free Will Baptist churches with a total membership of 462." Seven of these churches were in Oklahoma, four in Alabama, three in Florida, two in Georgia and one in Missouri.

Foreign Missions: The board reports another successful year in foreign mission work. It announced that it had secured the services of Rev. Raymond Riggs as secretary-treasurer, and expressed the hope of moving the office into the Headquarters Building in Nashville, Tennessee, soon. They recommended a budget of \$75,000 for the ensuing year.

The death of little Sheila Hanna, the infant daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Carlisle Hanna who were in the missionary service in India, was reported. The fact of the little daughter's dying so far away from their own homeland was the depressing feature about it.

Rev. and Mrs. Dan Cronk were reported to be doing a

"splendid job" in North India; the load thrust upon them after the release of Rev. and Mrs. Paul Woolsey, however, was very heavy. Miss Barnard reports the conversion of three Indians (one an old man) and of their being buried beneath the liquid wave in baptism.

"Our work continues to advance on the island of Cuba; it was my privilege this year to attend the annual convention and graduation services; it was an occasion that I shall never forget," said the secretary.

Our missionary force in Cuba in 1953 were: Rev. and Mrs. T. H. Willey, Miss Bessie Yelcy, Miss Lucy Wischart and Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Phenicie. There were also twenty-five full-time workers and seven other helpers in school, making thirty-two native workers. Then there are the students who go out each week end in service.

The school property has a valuation of about \$30,000. There are a number of Cuban chapels which are the property of the Cuban Association or the local churches; there are nine such churches, the approximate value being \$500 each. There are about ninety preaching points.

Executive Secretary: "I feel that the year 1952-53 has, in many respects, been one of our best years as a National Association. At long last the National Headquarters is a reality. The Board of Trustees of the National Association closed a deal on last May 22 whereby we became the owners of the property at 3801 Richland Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee. We paid \$4,000 down and assumed a first mortgage, payable at \$145 per month. This property was bought from Rev. Henry Melvin who holds a second mortgage on the property; the mortgage draws no interest. The total cost of the property was \$19,000."

The association took on an executive department and added an executive secretary, who will act for the executive department and the National Association when they are not in session.

Thus another year, a very successful year in the work of the

various activities of the National Association, has gone down in history; it is very clear to all of us that it is growing stronger, more important, and more useful in the Kingdom of God each year of its existence.

The Eighteenth Session

On Tuesday evening, July 13, 1954, the National Association of Free Will Baptists assembled at the Memorial Auditorium in Spartansburg, South Carolina. The Tuesday evening service was spent mostly in prayer, praise and devotional service and the delivery of the keynote message.

Brother I. L. Stanley led the congregation in the praise service and Rev. Burkette Raper the devotional service. The keynote message based on "The Urgency of the Burning Heart," was delivered by Rev. Clarence F. Bowen, his text being Luke 24: 28-36.

The regular business of the annual meeting began Wednesday morning when ministers and messengers from eighteen states gathered again at the same place. The moderator took charge and the program for the session began to move on.

The annual session was not as harmonious as some that had been held by it before; there were a few items of business upon which the members of the body disagreed. This gave room for considerable polemics on the part of some, serious thought on the part of others and prayer on the part of still others. However, it all worked out in such a way as to prove that men can differ, thrash out their differences and yet live as members of the body of Christ.

Excutive Secretary: This report says, "Nearly every department of the National Association will report solid financial gains over previous years, but this is not the most striking demonstration of God's power and presence among us. The fire of evangelism and revival, which are no longer dreams or hopes, have at last begun to blaze in answer to much praying."

Then he refers to the founding of *Contact* and says, "It was a step of great faith, for we didn't have the first subscription or pledge, but in one year it goes out to 3,596 subscribers.

The next matter referred to was the national headquarters, and he says that five departments have carried on their promotion and service from the Headquarters Building—the executive, foreign missions, league, home missions and woman's auxiliary.

Sunday School: This department report says that this year's convention was not as good as hoped for in attendance, but the interest was high. This board will have a promotional secretary in the field by September 1, 1954.

Woman's Auxiliary: The national woman's auxiliary reports that 476 were in attendance at their convention this year. Statistics are as follows: number of organizations, 332; membership this year, 9,788; increase in membership this year, 378; total receipts, \$12,294.95; paid out, \$13,105.21.

League: The Free Will Baptist league reports that it has enjoyed its best year in every way. The highlights of the year were: Setting up of national office in Headquarters Building; paying for electric power line to the mission station in Cuba; a highly successful Nation-Wide League Conference held in June, attended by nearly 700 people from 17 different states.

Bible College: The Bible College reports total receipts as \$42,008.91, and expenditures as \$41,425.00.

Home Missions: The home mission report says, "This has been a banner year for our national home mission program in every sense of the word." Again they say, "Since August, 1952, there has been an average of one new church formed every five days, for a total of 146. The income for 1953-54 was 300% over last year, or a total of \$25,489.62.

Foreign Missions: The foreign mission board reported this past year "the greatest year in the history of our foreign mission department. . . . Wherever we have gone in the interest of foreign missions, we have had splendid response. . . . More important

than the financial response has been the spiritual reaction of our people. . . . Many of our one-night services have been nothing short of an old-fashioned revival."

Rev. Raymond Riggs, the promotional secretary-treasurer, and Rev. E. C. Morris of Georgia visited the mission field in India. "The work in Kotagiri, South India, is moving along in a successful way; we have a very fine eleven-room house, well furnished, where our missionaries live, and which provides a reading room, small chapel and office. A garage and the mission car, we found in good condition; the car is meeting a real need there in the hills. There is also a lovely three-room cottage on the mission property which is being rented for thirty rupees per month.

"Down the hill and across the road is the church and school. The school, running through the fifth standard, is government approved and subsidized almost to pay the salaries of the teachers. A very fine Indian man is pastoring the church in Kotagiri; he also aids in evangelizing the surrounding villages. The first Sunday we were in Kotagiri, 150 attended the Sunday school there. We engaged a few nights in revival, and over 40 souls surrendered to the Lord.

"From South India, we traveled by car, train, plane and bus to our field in North India, a distance of fifteen hundred miles. We are occupying two stations in North India. One is located in rented quarters in the city of Kishanganj. This is a city of some 15,000 people without electricity or sewers, and offers a real opportunity to do work for the Lord. It is the railway center and post office of the surrounding territory.

"Thirty-six miles from Kishanganj is the other station, located at Sonapurhat. This is mission property, arranged for by Rev. Paul Woolsey while he was in India. There are four acres of land upon which is built a four-room house with asbestos roof, a small three-room house built for a dispensary and two small bamboo houses for servants' quarters."

At Kotagiri in South India, Mr. Riggs found Miss Barnard

and Miss Wilson in charge of Rev. and Mrs. Dan Cronk and Rev. and Mrs. Carlisle Hanna, each of them he found well and "seemed quite happy in their work."

In describing conditions in India Mr. Riggs said, "We had not been there long (in North India) until the impact of real missionary work began to be felt in our hearts. The many sights in this strange land of heathenism and idol worship, with its teeming multitudes milling about in darkness, almost broke my heart, especially when I realized that we had waited so long to tell them of Jesus.

"Over one thousand towns and villages consisting of two million souls in darkness, and only four young people in the midst to declare the gospel to them! This is certainly a challenge. Even though our missionaries here are comparatively unseasoned and, in a measure, immature, they are certainly doing a fine job for the Lord. They are laboring against disease, climate, language barrier, immoral customs and practice, and most of all against the devil himself."

From Cuba a most glowing report comes telling of many conversions, the establishing of new churches, and the growth in grace of the many Christians in that mission field. The new worth of mission property in Cuba is placed at \$36,629.76.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Stevens, missionaries in Africa, are home on a furlough and are visiting many of the churches in the homeland in the interest of foreign missions in general. It is said that their ministry is proving a blessing wherever they go.

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